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ENGLAND'S TRAINING

By the

Author of ESSAYS ON THE CHURCH



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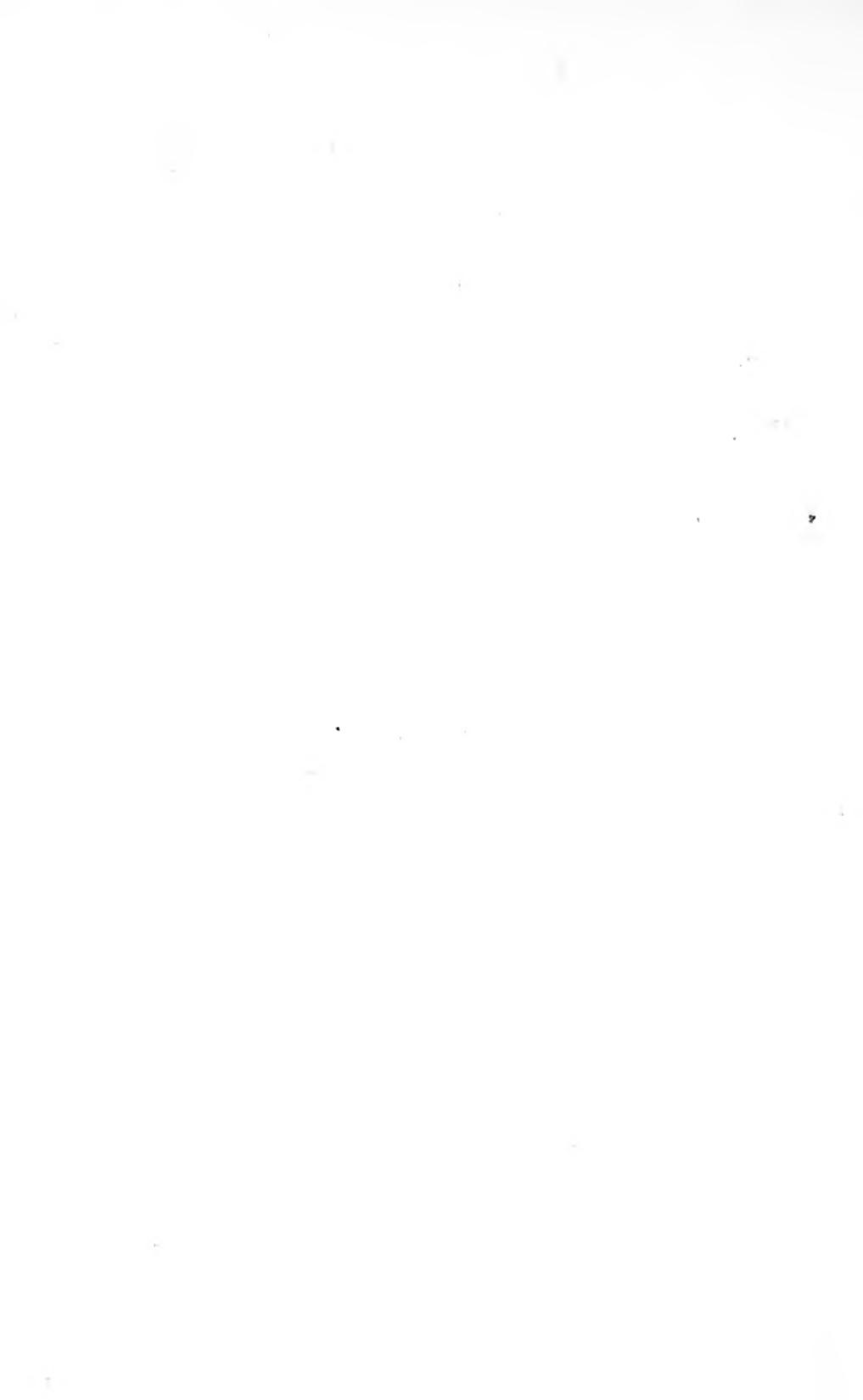
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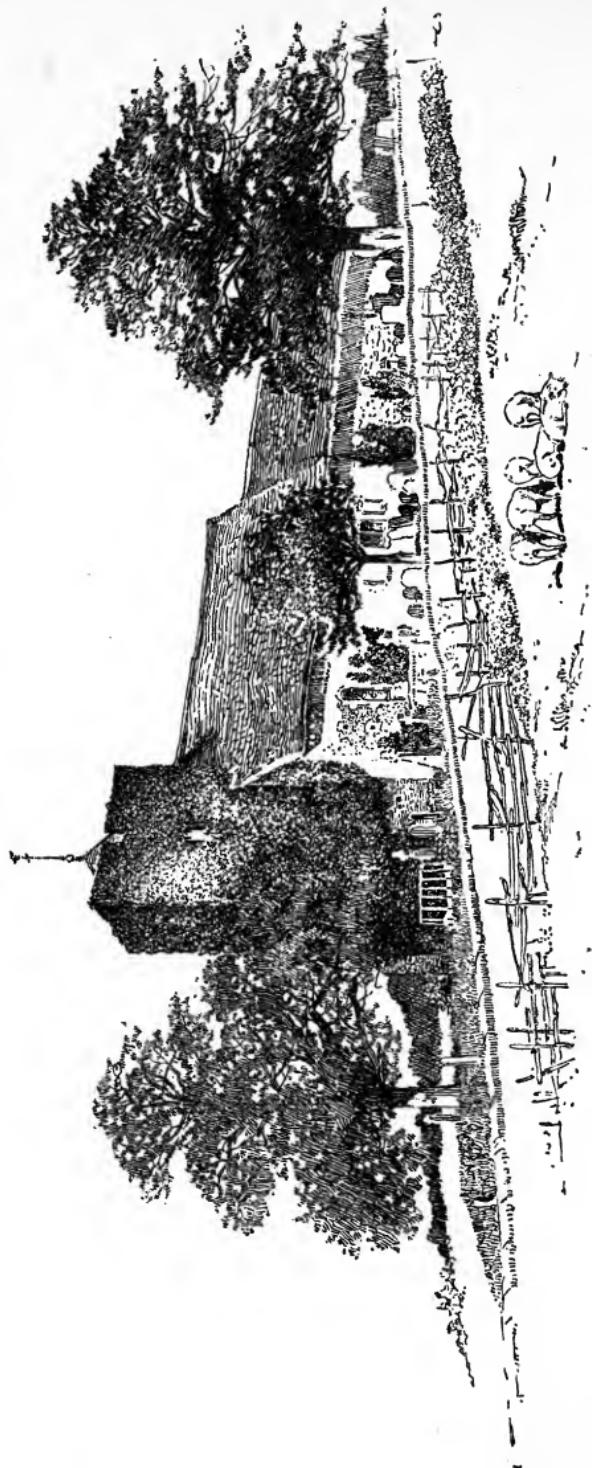
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Joseph Burtt Davy
From his mother

Christmas 1886.

ENGLAND'S TRAINING.







J. C. ST. MARTIN'S
OLDEST CHURCH IN ENGLAND

ENGLED
1884.

ENGLAND'S TRAINING

AN HISTORICAL SKETCH.

Seeley, R. B.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "ESSAYS ON THE CHURCH"



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ENGLAND'S TRAINING.

- I. PREFATORY.
- II. GREGORY'S MISSION TO BRITAIN.
- III. RISE OF THE PAPACY.
- IV. A LINGERING HOPE.



ENGLAND'S TRAINING.

I.

PREFATORY.

ROME, the fourth kingdom made known to Daniel (chap. vii. 7)—“dreadful and terrible and strong exceedingly”—was not, in its Imperial form, established *at once*, like those of Cyrus and Alexander. “To the nobles Augustus could boast that he had himself resigned more than once the title of Imperator, which they still continued to urge upon him.”* “He accepted a renewal of his imperial functions for a second term of five years in B.C. 18.”† His death took place in A.D. 14. His wife’s son, Tiberius, had been long put forward as his destined successor, and, now, “after a decent show of resistance, he consented to become the actual chief of the

* Merivale’s Hist. of Rome, p. 406. † Ibid. 415.

Roman people."* Thus, by a gradual advance during more than thirty years, an Empire, the greatest that the earth had yet seen, was at last established.

Meanwhile, and almost side by side, another Empire, a thousand times greater than that of Rome, was perceived to be visibly commencing. These two reigns, of Augustus and Tiberius, saw the silent growth of something which was to be, to the people of this earth, of immeasurably greater importance than any temporary empires or emperors of Rome, or autocrats of the human race.

In the later years of the reign of Augustus, a child was born in Bethlehem, in the land of Judea, who was destined to be, in the end of this world's present history, "King of Kings and Lord of Lords." This child was still young when Augustus died, but while Tiberius occupied the imperial seat, Jesus Christ was carried to "a place called Golgotha," and was there put to death. In three days he rose from the tomb; and after forty days (Acts i. 3), he quitted this earth and ascended to heaven—angels testifying that "He shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

So began the Church of Christ, which has

* Merivale's Hist. of Rome, p. 430.

grown ever since, sometimes separated from the empire (as at the beginning), sometimes intertwined with it.

When we commence the History of England, then called "Britain," we find this co-existence, this coincidence, meeting us very frequently. Tiberius was succeeded by Caius Caligula ; and he, after four short years, was followed by Claudius, a nephew of Tiberius. It was in his third year that an expedition was at last sent, not to explore the British islands, but to add them to the empire. It is from A.D. 43 that we date Britain's admission into the empire—Britain's entrance within the pale of civilization. That same date is met with in a very different story. In the tenth and eleventh chapters of St. Luke's narrative, we read of the baptism of Cornelius, a Roman centurion ; and of the exclamation of "the brethren that were in Judea"—"Then hath God unto the Gentiles granted repentance unto life" (Acts xi. 18). The same admission of Gentiles we find repeated in Acts xi. 26, and it is added, "The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Thus, the admission of Britain into the empire, and the admission of Roman believers into the visible Church of Christ, occur just at the same period of time, A.D. 41-43.

We must not forget, however, that the Britons

were heathens of a very tenacious kind ; and that the Romans, to whose empire they were joining themselves, were heathens also. But we have only to read the latter half of the New Testament to satisfy ourselves that already, in several, or rather in many different countries of the Roman empire, the Gospel was being earnestly preached. Or we may take up the letter written by Pliny the younger, governor of Pontus and Bithynia, to the Emperor Trajan, inquiring what he ought to do with the increasing crowds of Christians, "who were causing the temples of the gods to be forsaken." And thus, while Britain, remaining in the hands of the Druids, might exclude Christianity, it became, when it fell into the hands of the Imperial Government, only what Pontus and Bithynia were under Pliny, a Roman governor.

This was the condition of the empire in many of its parts. In A.D. 43, Britain began to be a Roman province, and before the century closed, the island was seen to belong to Rome. For two or three generations, Roman settlers and merchants poured into it, and of these, thousands had previously joined the Christian church. Meanwhile "A taste for civilized life and its refinements," says Dean Merivale, "soon reduced the poor British people to the condition of mere provincials"—

provincials of an empire which, as Tertullian says, was becoming “filled with Christians.”

In each century, now, alike in Rome and in Britain, the Governments grew weaker than in the preceding one. At last, about A.D. 407 or 411, the final message came, which summoned the garrisons in England to return to Rome, for the defence of the endangered empire. The poor people of Britain were warned that they must take charge of their own island—must govern it—must defend it.* They shrunk from the task. The troublesome Picts and Scots grew increasingly annoying. Their first thought was to send for help to Rome—to beg for assistance from those who had long been their protectors. Bede tells us how *Ætius*, at Rome, in his third consulship, received from “the wretched remains of the Britons,” a letter which commenced thus:—

“To *Ætius*, thrice Consul, the sighs of the Britons,” and which described their condition, in these lamentable terms: “The barbarians drive us to the sea—the sea drives us back to the barbarians; between them, we are either slain or drowned.”

And this, as Bede tells us, was the third entreaty of the same kind that “the wretched Britons” had sent to Rome. But now the Romans replied that they could not any longer undertake

* *Merivale's History*, p. 647.

such troublesome expeditions for their sake ; advising them, for the future, "to handle their weapons like men."*

The same sort of helplessness had been seen in a very different direction, and at an earlier period. In the third century the Arians, and in the fourth the Pelagians, had invaded England with their heresies, and, in both cases, they found the poor Britons unable to meet them. In the latter case, Bishop Short says : "The British divines, being unequal to the task, were forced to call for the assistance of Germanus, a bishop of Gaul." And afterwards, this bishop, "pitying the weakness and inability of the British priesthood, attempted to introduce into the island the study of sound learning and theology."†

Mr. Green gives the same account of the character of the British at this stage of their history. He says :—

"Unlike its neighbour Gaul, Britain had contributed nothing to the intellectual riches of the Empire. Not one of the poets or rhetoricians of the time is of British origin. Even moral movements found little foothold in the island. When Christianity became the religion of the empire, Britain must have become nominally Christian.

* Bede : Ecc. Hist. chap. xiii.

† Bishop Short's History, p. 6.

Yet no Christian inscription or ornament has been found, of earlier date than the close of the Roman rule.”*

Britain, then, or rather the Britons, perished ; and they perished, by their own fatuity. But of this, the story must be told alone. It is one by itself ; but it reminds us of a similar case which is briefly alluded to in the last book of the New Testament. “The church of the Laodiceans” is warned, by the Head of all the Churches :—

“I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot : I would that thou wert cold or hot.”

(That this description applied to Britain, Mr. Green has just shown us.)

The Lord continues :—“So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot ; I will spue thee out of my mouth !” (Rev. iii. 15.)

We are about to see this warning terribly realized in the case of the poor Britons.

Because, by their imbecility, they were rendered unable to take the Romans’ advice, to “handle their weapons like men,” they were driven to seek for some neighbours to come and help them :— Because, by their lukewarmness, they were led to regard the Christian faith with indifference—it did not matter much, they thought, if these new allies were heathens : And, lastly, being destitute

* Green’s *Making of England*, p. 6.

of common prudence, they thought it of little consequence that a Roman poet had described these Sleswickers, as “Fierce beyond other foes, and cunning as they are fierce ;—sea-wolves that live on the pillage of the world !”

We know no other case which resembles this : A nation, possessed, by the Roman withdrawal, of this island of Britain ; a nation consisting, it cannot be doubted, of a million or two of people, finds itself, by its mere helplessness, destitute of any power to live peaceably in it ! “The barbarians,” they write, “drive us to the sea ; the sea drives us back to the barbarians,” hence we have no choice, but to perish ! What could a flock of sheep have said else than this ?

After a few years of this misery had been felt, the leaders, if such there were, said to some passing freebooters, from the neighbouring coasts of Sleswick, “Come and help us : take a portion of our island, live there, and help us to drive back these barbarians, the Picts and Scots ; and you shall be welcome to as much of our southern shores as it is convenient for you to occupy, and to cultivate.” The invitation was given, and it was willingly accepted.

“The poor, helpless Britons,” says Mr. Green, “by promises of land and pay, induced a band of these warriors from Jutland, in A.D. 449, with

Hengest and Horsa at their head, to land on the shores of Thanet; and with that landing, the history of our present ENGLAND begins.”*

But this history differs essentially from most other narratives of conquest. In times of old, Babylon, and Persia, and Rome, sent forth, in successive ages, vast armies, overwhelmed all opponents, and in a few years reared up great empires. But the victories of these “warriors” or “pirates” from Sleswick, was, almost always, the victory of the *few* over the *many*. “The invaders of Britain,” says Mr. Green, “landed in small parties, and were only gradually reinforced by after-comers.” And “each band and each leader preferred their own separate course of action.” And with this account, Bede, writing in the seventh or eighth century, agrees, saying:—

“The Angles or Saxons arrived in Britain in three long ships, and had a place assigned to them in the eastern part of the island;” “but a more considerable fleet was quickly sent over, bringing a greater number of men.”†

He adds, of the events which followed, that these Jutes, and Angles, and Saxons, soon after, “seeking an occasion to quarrel, protested, that unless more plentiful supplies were brought to them, they

* Green’s Hist. of England, p. 7.

† Bede: Ecc. Hist. chap. xv.

would break the confederacy." Soon they plundered the neighbouring cities and country ; and ravaged almost every part of this devoted land. Public as well as private structures were overturned ; the priests were everywhere slain before the altars ; prelates and people, without any respect of persons, were destroyed by fire and sword."

A war of this kind, not between Babylon and Persia, or between Greece and Rome, but between some ferocious invaders and a helpless people like the Britons, could not easily be ended. The combatants grew more ferocious and more envenomed year by year. A war between two civilized nations, such as France and Prussia, may, now-a-days, be fought out and ended in a couple of years ; but this war, between the Angles and the Britons, lasted more than two centuries. "The first conflict between Hengest and the Britons," says Mr. Green, "took place in A.D. 455," and the battle of Deorham, which he dates in A.D. 577, marks the time "when half the island still remained unconquered," "but when," he adds, "we pass from an age of Conquest to an age of Settlement."

This period of an hundred and twenty years, however, was both a terrible and a conclusive one. The British nation was, practically, annihilated, and the British church disappeared with it. So confesses Mr. Green.

“The victory of Aylesford did more than give East Kent to the Anglians ; it struck the keynote to the whole English conquest of Britain. The massacre which followed showed at once the merciless nature of the struggle which had begun. The priests were slain at the altars, the churches were fired.” “The English conquest was a sheer dispossession and slaughter of the people whom the English had conquered.” “When the strife at last ended, Britain had become England ; a land, that is, not of Britons, but of Englishmen.”*

To this fearful fact, all historians yield their assent.

Joseph Milner says :—

“The Angles or Saxons destroyed all outward appearance of a Christian church in the heart of the island. No barbarians were ever more ferocious or more idolatrous.” “For nearly a century and a half the Gospel of Christ had almost vanished.”†

Dean Milman concurs in this statement, saying : “Britain was the only country in which the conquest by the northern barbarians had been followed by *the extinction of Christianity.*”

Mosheim agrees, as to the main fact, observing, that “The state of the British church was deplor-

* Green’s History, p. 9.

† Milner’s Church Hist. vol. ii. c. 7.

able beyond expression ; it was almost totally overwhelmed and extinguished by the Anglo-Saxons, who adhered to the worship of the gods ; and who put an immense number of Christians to death.”*

And Dean Waddington follows, saying, “ Christianity was suddenly *swept away*, with the language itself, by the invasion of the Anglo-Saxons, and it was almost entirely obliterated.”†

* Mosheim, Cent. v.

† Waddington’s Church History, p. 142.

II.

GREGORY'S MISSION TO BRITAIN.

IT was the *British church*, and not Christianity, which was “obliterated,” which was “extinguished,” and the reason of this we have already pointed out. It was too much like that of the Laodiceans three centuries before.

But, in God’s goodness, it had been ordained that a better church should arise in its room. And this was quickly seen, in a way which no art of man could have accomplished—no wisdom of man could have conceived.

The bishopric of Rome, up to the time of the latter portion of the fourth century, was “a prize altogether magnificent—it conferred wealth and splendour ; it placed the fortunate aspirant at the pinnacle of fashion as well as of luxury.” The election of Damasus to the bishopric in A.D. 366, brought on a riot, and in one of the Christian churches as many as 160 persons were reported to have been killed.

But the lapse of another century had wrought a

fearful change. In A.D. 410 the city was sacked by the Goths. "Six days were passed in greedy pillage ; and the wealth of Rome was abandoned to its conquerors. Men were slain in the defence of their homes or their families. Concealed treasures were drawn to light by threats or tortures."* Forty years afterwards, the Vandals repeated all this with increasing rapacity. For fourteen days the city suffered every sort of misery. Nothing was left that could appear to be of any value.†

Twenty years later, Rome was sacked for the third time, by a new horde of barbarians. We mention these things chiefly to show that the Rome of A.D. 590, of which Gregory I. was chosen to be the bishop, was a very different place from the Rome of two centuries before.

The new bishop was far from being an ordinary sort of man. A review of his life shows a multitude of faults and errors ; but, on a balance, perhaps more of excellences and of virtues.

He was full of activity—of endeavours to do good. Few men have ever attracted so many enquiries after good—after the truth. At the present moment—above a thousand years having elapsed—we have more than eight hundred letters written by him, most of which are in reply to enquiries

* Merivale's Hist. of Rome, p. 636.

† Ibid. p. 651.

addressed to him for his opinion on some practical question. And, besides all these, we have an "Exposition on the book of Job," an "Exposition on the Canticles," and a volume of "Homilies on Ezekiel." A collection of his writings, published in Paris in A.D. 1705, occupied four volumes in folio.

And yet he was a great sufferer from bodily illness. In one letter, he says, "I have been almost eleven months confined to my bed. I am so oppressed that life is a heavy punishment. I faint daily through pain, and breathe after death as my remedy." In another, a year later, he says, "I have been nearly two years confined to my bed, in constant pain. Often I have been forced to return to my bed, when I had scarcely left it, by the violence of the pain."*

Wonderful is it, that amidst all this, and encumbered also with the burden of a large and exhausting diocese, Gregory found time and manhood enough to attempt the deliverance of a whole nation, lately subjugated by Heathenism, and to bring them, or rather it, into the enjoyment of the truth of the Gospel. That a man so encompassed by a variety of duties should find courage for such a work as this, is, in itself, astonishing.

Britain was a thousand miles from Rome. The

* Milner, vol. iii. p. 57.

state of things in that island could not be unknown to the Bishop of Rome. For more than a century past, the Angles and Saxons, worshippers of Woden, had set fire to the Christian churches, having first slain the ministers. To ask a minister of Christ, then, to go to the island of Britain to preach the gospel, was something much worse than, in modern times, to send him to heathen Fiji or to the Congo. The probable fate of such a one in those days was known before hand.

But, some years before he became Bishop of Rome, the Holy Spirit of God had fixed in Gregory's mind a strong desire. Passing the slave-market, he saw some youths of fair countenance, who had been made captives in some skirmish ; and he was told that they were Angles. The wish came instantly into his mind, " that these Angli might be made fit to live with the angels in heaven. He thought of a Mission, and proposed it to the then bishop ; offering to be himself one of the missionaries. But the offer was coldly received. He failed in this, his first attempt.

A few years passed over, and Gregory's value had come to be estimated in Rome. The bishopric had become vacant, and he was, it may be said, *forced* to accept it.* He had scarcely taken his seat before the recollection of " the poor Angli "

* Milner, Cent. vi. c. 5.

and of “wretched Britain” began to revive in his mind. Bede tells us that it was in the tenth year of the Emperor Mauritius that he, Gregory, entered on the bishopric ; and that in the fourteenth year of the same reign he sent Augustine and his companions to preach the gospel to the English. Now, as the gathering together of a band of forty missionaries, the examination and selection of them, and the finding of sufficient means for so large and costly a mission, to be sent and supported in a country a thousand miles distant ;—as all this could not be accomplished in one year, or in two, we see clearly that the purpose, the resolve, must have grown in Gregory’s mind, in the very first year of his occupation of that depressing Roman bishopric.

However, it was God’s purpose far more than it was Gregory’s ; and that conviction enables us to understand how he was enabled to persevere during these twenty or thirty months of most difficult preparation ; and in the fourth year of his bishopric, to send forth, at once, both Augustine and his forty associates, whom we find to have commenced the journey in August, A.D. 597. But in a very few days their courage failed. They seem to have heard, while on their journey, of the ferocious conduct of the Lombards, who had recently broken into Italy, and were inflicting on the Christians “calamities of every kind.” So alarmed were

some of the missionaries, that they succeeded in inducing Augustine to return to Rome with a letter to Gregory, praying him to release them from "so dangerous a journey." But the only reply they received told them that "it had been better not to have begun a good work than to think of withdrawing from it" almost before it had been undertaken. "When Augustine returns," says Gregory, "obey him in all things; and the Almighty God will protect you. May He keep you in safety, my beloved sons."

So strengthened, they proceeded, and in due time, reached the shores of Kent; "landing," says Mr. Green, "on the very spot where Hengest had landed more than a century before." Some interpreters whom they had engaged among the Franks were sent forward with letters for King Ethelbert, and probably for Queen Bercta also. She had been a Frankish princess, and, when marrying Ethelbert, had obtained permission to have a Christian church set apart for her use in Canterbury, and to provide for its services by her own chaplain.

The king desired them, in reply, to remain, for the present, on the Isle of Thanet, where they had landed, until he should consider the matter. Some days after, he visited them there, and being still a worshipper of Woden, he took care to meet them

in the open air (it is supposed for fear of enchantments). It gives us a favourable impression of Augustine's character, that Bede describes him as "preaching to the king and all his attendants, the Word of Life."*

The king replied, as might have been expected.

"Your words and promises are very fair; but as they are new to us, and of uncertain import, I cannot approve of them, forsaking that which I have so long followed. But because you are come from far, and, as I conceive, are desirous to impart to us those things which you believe to be true and beneficial, we will not molest you, but give you favourable entertainment and needful sustenance; nor do we forbid you by preaching to gain as many as you can to your religion."†

Thus they were permitted, at once, to reside in Canterbury, with liberty to preach. There can be no doubt that the queen would hear of this with the greatest satisfaction; nor can it be unreasonable to attribute to her influence, that not only a dwelling-place, but subsistence also, was allowed to them.

Bede continues his narrative:—

"As soon as they entered the dwelling-place

* Probably, in the words of St. Luke, "Good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." Or, "Glory to God in the highest: on earth peace, good will toward men."

† Bede's History, chap. xxv.

assigned to them, they began to imitate the course of life practised in the Primitive Church ; applying themselves to frequent prayer, watching and fasting, preaching the Word of Life to as many as they could ; receiving only their necessary food ; living themselves as they prescribed to others ; being always ready to suffer any adversity for the truth which they preached.”*

Thus began the practical working of Gregory’s Mission to England. Its progress was continued. Several of their hearers believed and were baptized. The church, St. Martin’s, which had been conceded to the Queen, was their place of worship. There they began to meet, to sing, to pray, till, after a while, the king, himself won over, gave them liberty to preach anywhere, and to build churches wherever they could. He used no compulsion ; but, by degrees, the people began to flock together to hear the word and to receive baptism and to join themselves to the Church of Christ.

Touching the missionaries who had accompanied Augustine, the case resembled that of Christ’s own apostles. Twelve apostles were at first ordained, and of these one apostatized. Of the other eleven—three, four, or five are heard of afterwards ; of the rest we know nothing. In like manner, of Augustine’s forty companions we hear of

* Bede’s History, chap. xxvi.

the doings of Laurentius, Mellitus, Justus, Paulinus, Aidan, Byrinus, and Asaph, several of whom are noticed favourably. Of Aidan Milner remarks that "he was a shining example of godliness." On the whole, he observes, "That there was a real effusion of the Holy Spirit on England, so that numbers were turned from idols to the living God has been evidenced." "Our ancestors saw in this century a blessed time ; the fruits of which will abide for ever."*

We cannot write in this place the history of England's recovery, unless we could devote a volume to the work. Between A.D. 449 and 577 the Sleswick warriors or "pirates," had uprooted Christianity from this island ; employing, perhaps, thirty or forty thousand men in the work. Then, beginning in A.D. 597, Augustine and his forty missionaries, without sword or spear, brought it back again. But the inner, the real work—as in the days of the apostles—was done not by men, but by the Spirit of the living God.

Among the human agents employed, few, very few, occupy a higher place than Gregory I., Bishop of Rome A.D. 590-604. And yet, while doing him this justice, we dare not forget to acknowledge the fact that he lived at a period when a tide of superstition was rising rapidly around the Church,

* Milner, Cent. vii. chap. i.

and that he could not always withstand it. It is true that he was no Pope, and that he sternly withstood the coming Papacy. But he was one of the first favourers of the figment of a Purgatory ; of the use of prayers for the dead, of the preciousness of Relics ; and of the veneration of saints and of their images. In fact, Popery was already at the door, and Gregory's two chief distinctions are—that he sent the mission of Augustine into England, and that he withstood the notion of a universal bishop. The success of the mission sent by him was rapid, and—externally, at least—it was complete. Dean Waddington observes that “six other Anglo-Saxon kings embraced the faith of Augustine and Ethelbert, and it was very generally propagated throughout the whole of the island before the close of the seventh century.”*

* History of the Church, p. 143.

III.

RISE OF THE PAPACY.

ENGLAND, then, in the course of the seventh century became in the chiefest of all respects what England is now. Augustine had sent word to Ethelbert that he and his brethren had "brought a joyful message, assuring to all who sincerely received it, everlasting joys in heaven and a kingdom that would never end."* Not very long after, the king himself, embracing the faith of Christ, granted to the missionaries leave to preach openly and to build churches wherever they could.

This was more than twelve hundred years ago ; but Christians in Canterbury and in all other parts of England have nothing better to desire in this nineteenth century than a continuance, a perpetuation of that same "preaching of the Word of Life" which Augustine brought to their forefathers in the year A.D. 597.

Here, however, we must pause for a few moments

* Bede, chap. xxv.

to take a hasty glance at this bishop Gregory of Rome and the remainder of his brief career.

Just about the time of his elevation to the Roman bishopric a controversy was beginning, in which he took a leading part. John, the Bishop of Constantinople, had persuaded the Emperor Mauritius to confer upon him the title of "Universal Patriarch." At this pretension Gregory was indignant. He did not protest against the advancement of another bishop in preference to himself, but against the use of such a title by any one. He wrote—

"My fellow-priest, John, would fain be called *Universal Bishop*. I am compelled to exclaim, 'O tempora! O mores!' Even priests seek for themselves ambitious names, and glory in new and profane titles. Far from the hearts of Christians be that name of blasphemy, wherein the honour of all priests is sacrificed, while it is madly arrogated by a single individual."

In this opposition Gregory persevered to the end of his life in A.D. 604. But he had not long quitted this world before another Bishop of Rome, coming into his place, succeeded in inducing the Emperor Phocas to grant *him* the title which Gregory had disclaimed! Dean Milman says:—

"The brief pontificate of Boniface III. is marked by the assumption of that awful title of 'Universal

Bishop' before which the pious humility of Gregory had shuddered. No language could express his devout abhorrence of this impious, heretical, diabolic, anti-Christian assertion of superiority. Yet Boniface succeeded, not merely in wresting this title from the prelate of Constantinople, but in obtaining an acknowledgment of the supremacy of St. Peter's successor."*

This was in the early part of the seventh century. But lofty pretensions could not preserve the Romish Church from a rapid, a terrible decline. The city and state of Rome was troubled and shaken throughout the eighth century. In A.D. 728 it revolted from the Empire ; and about A.D. 774 it was entirely separated. Still, its decline could not be arrested. Gibbon, the historian, thus describes it :—

"The Roman pontiffs of the ninth and tenth centuries were insulted, imprisoned and murdered by their tyrants ; and such was their indigence, that they could neither support the state of a prince nor exercise the charity of a priest. The influence of two women, Marozia and Theodora, was founded on their wealth and beauty ; the most strenuous of their lovers were rewarded with the Papal mitre. The grandson, and a great grandson of Marozia, were both seated in the

* Milman's Latin Christianity, vol. ii. p. 121.

chair of St. Peter ; the latter at the age of nineteen.”*

But let us open the pages of one of the most esteemed of the Romish historians, Cardinal Baronius. He thus describes this fearful portion of the Roman history :—

“ Behold the nine-hundredth year of the Redeemer begins, in which a new age commences ; which by reason of its asperity and barrenness of good, has been called the *iron age* ; and for its exuberant evil, the *leaden age* ; and for its poverty of writers, the *dark age*. Scarce any one can believe, except he sees it, what vile, unsightly—yea, what execrable and hateful things, the apostolic see, upon whose hinges the Church turns, has been forced to suffer : with what filth it was her fate to be besprinkled, with what stench to be infected ; with what impurities to be defiled ! ”†

And again, passing on to A.D. 912, the same historian writes :—

“ What was then the face of ‘ the holy Romish Church ? ’ How exceeding foul was it, when sordid and abandoned women ruled at Rome, and false pontiffs, their lovers, were intruded into the chair of St. Peter.”

* Gibbon, “ Decline and Fall,” vol. ix. chap. 49.

† Baronii Ann. Ecclest. Ann. 900. (Antwerp, 1603.)

Another eminent writer, Archbishop Genebrard, of Aix (1537), says, speaking of the ninth and tenth centuries :—

“This age has been unfortunate, in so far that during nearly a hundred and fifty years, about fifty Popes have fallen away from the virtues of their predecessors, being *apostates*, rather than apostolical.”*

Surely, then, it is not a fact to be disputed, that in this portion of history, A.D. 800–1000, the Church of Rome, viewed chiefly in its centre, its metropolis, was, to use Petrarch’s words, “the temple of heresy ; the forger of lies ;—the hell upon earth !”†

The middle of the eleventh century saw the close of “the frightful disorders which were the scandal of the Roman Church for nearly two centuries.” The appearance of Hildebrand (Gregory VII.) wrought a mighty change ; and yet we dare not call it a change for the better.

The growth of the power and of the wealth of the Church was continuous from the eighth or ninth centuries to the twelfth and thirteenth ; but with this difference—that in the eighth, ninth, and tenth, when the Bishops of Rome, personally, commanded no respect, that growth was slow and

* Littledale’s Plain Reasons, p. 187.

† Ibid. p. 187.

silent ; but when a higher class of Popes, such as Hildebrand (Gregory VII.) and Innocent III. arose, then the growth of the Church's power became rapid, and at last, intolerable.

The basis of this power rested wholly on the fiction of a Purgatory, which for the first five or six hundred years had found little credence in the Church, but in the days of Gregory I. (A.D. 590-604) under his favour, grew and increased. The practical use of this fiction was seen in two directions: 1. In Masses for the dead ; and 2. In Papal Indulgences.

i. Of the first of these, let us hear Dr. Littledale, whose description is both brief and lucid. We give his own words :—

“ The authorized belief of Roman Catholics is, that the great majority of their co-religionists who are saved at all, pass, after death, into hideous tortures of undefined duration ; and the received opinion is, that this duration is very long, and may extend to thousands of years. Now, the Sacrifice of the Mass is held to be the chief means of relieving souls from this Purgatory.

“ These Masses are said, for private individuals, according to a fixed tariff. Therefore, rich people purchase thousands of Masses for the repose of their own souls or those of their kindred. Thus, only the other day, Queen Christina of Spain left

money by will for ten thousand Masses to be said for herself and her husband—that is, five thousand for each of them.”*

This theory, not one syllable of which is to be found in Scripture, has this feature of popularity about it, that every Romish priest who is qualified to “read Mass” is thus qualified to rescue the soul of a dead man or woman out of Purgatory. But then it leads to some other consequences which, perhaps, are not always borne in mind.†

* Dr. Littledale’s Reasons against joining the Church of Rome, p. 108.

† Let us give an instance or two of this, occurring in our own time :—A score of years since, or rather more, an Irish barrister of eminence, Mr. Whiteside (who afterwards became Lord Chief Justice of Ireland) spent an autumn in Italy, and on his return, published, in London, an account of that tour. In one chapter he says, “that he was soon struck by the crowds of priests who swarmed everywhere ; and when conversing with an Italian friend he expressed to him his wonder. But his friend assured him, in reply, that they had not nearly enough. “Enough for what ?” was the natural reply. To which his friend answered, “Enough for the Masses that are to be said. Every person of any property, who anticipates death, or who loses his wife or his child, immediately sends for a priest, and orders a hundred or a thousand Masses. And these orders flow in so fast, that there are always tens of thousands in arrear, which the priests cannot overtake ; and this arrear keeps always growing.” “And what do you do then ?” asked Mr. Whiteside. “Oh, when the number of Masses paid for, and not said, becomes too great, the priests send a petition to the Pope ; and he, *for a certain payment*, issues a decree, that so many

So much for the first of these devices, based upon the figment of a Purgatory, and of the healing power of Masses for the dead. Bishop Short gives the date of the tenth century, as that in which the practice of "saying Masses for the dead" began to prevail. He says:—

"Private or solitary Mass was unknown in the early Church ; and for the first nine hundred years there is no form of ordaining priests to offer Mass for the living and the dead. In the canons of

thousands of Masses which have not been said, *shall be as though they had been said*. And so the account is squared."

Now the first thought that occurs, on reading Mr. Whitside's narrative, is, that the traveller must have been hoaxed. But, before there was time for inquiry, another friend said, that he had seen a similar narrative, but it was in a book about Spain. It was sought for, and found it.

Mr. H. D. Inglis, in his "Travels in Spain," in 1830, writes thus:—The scene was in Alicant.

"A certain rich proprietor, who died about six months before, left money to the priests, sufficient to purchase twelve thousand Masses for his soul. But after a few of these had been said, the series of Masses was discontinued. And then a process at law was commenced by the heirs, to recover the money, the Church having failed to fulfil the condition. The defence set up was this:—Those upon whom the labour of saying all the Masses had devolved, had applied to the Bishop, who, in his turn, applied to the Pope ; and now, upon the trial, a Papal bull was produced, which declared, by his supreme authority, that the saying of twelve Masses should have the same effect, and should be as beneficial to the soul of the deceased, as if the whole twelve thousand had been said."*

* Inglis's Travels in Spain, vol. ii. p. 234.

A.D. 960 the practice seems to have been established.” *

2. Of the second of these inventions, Papal Indulgences, Dr. Littledale gives this account :—

“ As one drop of Christ’s blood was sufficient for the redemption of the whole world—all the rest that he shed, together with the merits and prayers of all the saints, over and above what were needed for their own salvation—constitutes an inexhaustible treasury or bank on which the Pope has a right to draw, and apply the drafts in payment for the release of the souls in Purgatory ; so that any one who obtains an Indulgence can apply its merits to himself, or transfer it to some other person.” †

This “inexhaustible treasury or bank” began to be first understood by the Popes about the eleventh or twelfth centuries. Urban II. and Victor III. granted Indulgences to all who engaged in the Holy War. This use of the device we find repeated by several Popes in A.D. 1122, 1145, and 1195. But it was reserved for Leo X., who immediately preceded the German Reformation, to exhibit both the doctrine and the practice of Papal Indulgences in a manner which greatly helped forward the efforts of Luther and Melancthon.

* Bp. Short’s Church History, p. 19.

† Dr. Littledale’s Reasons, p. 100.

This Pope, Leo X., had been admitted to Holy orders when only seven years of age ; he then became a Cardinal when only thirteen, and finally, was chosen Pope at the age of thirty-seven. By a lavish expenditure in all kinds of luxury and magnificence, and by a determination to finish St. Peter's Church, he had completely drained the Papal treasury.

A cardinal who was his relative, and who counselled him in questions of finance and revenue, advised the adoption of a larger and more general system of Indulgences than had ever yet been tried. Albert of Brandenburg came to his aid, and the principal agent selected to proclaim the Indulgence "for the completion of St. Peter's Church," was a Dominican friar, named John Tetzel. This man set forth with the one great object of selling Papal Indulgences in every town of Germany. A tariff was published, which assessed a prince or a baron twenty-five, or ten ducats ; and particular sins, polygamy, six ducats ; murder, eight, perjury, nine, &c., &c.

As he approached a town, a messenger waited upon the chief magistrate with the news, "The grace of God and of the Holy Father is at your gates." A procession was formed, the Pontifical Bull being carried at the head on a velvet cushion. Music and incense accompanied it. Arrived at

the church, Tetzel ascended the pulpit. His sermons may be appreciated by a single specimen :—

“ Indulgences are the most precious and sublime of God’s gifts. Draw near, and I will give you letters duly sealed, by which even the sins you shall hereafter desire to commit shall be all forgiven you. I would not exchange my privileges for those of St. Peter in heaven ; for I have saved more souls by my indulgences than he with his sermons ! ”

“ Dull and heedless man ; with ten grosschen you can deliver your father from purgatory, and you are so ungrateful that you will not rescue him ! ”

“ The money clinks against the bottom of the chest, and, that very moment, the soul escapes from purgatory and flies to heaven.”

No doubt has ever existed that Tetzel did accomplish that which he was sent to do—did succeed in collecting very large sums of money, and in helping to complete St. Peter’s Church. But not less certain is it that he had a large share in that Reformation which Luther was enabled to begin, and which separated from the Papacy almost one half of the kingdoms of Europe.

We have felt it to be necessary to explain these two chief errors of the Roman Church, because

their growth in this as well as in other countries constitutes a principal feature in the mediæval history of Europe. Bishop Short, referring to William I. (A.D. 1066) says : “ William had little reason to dread the power of the Vatican, for that formidable authority was *not yet* fully established.”* This fact ought to have been remembered when a modern historian (Mr. Freeman) ventured to suggest such a comparison as this :—

“ Among our own later princes, the great Edward alone can bear for a moment the comparison with Alfred. And, when tried by such a standard, even the great Edward fails.”

The idea of such a balancing is wholly irrational. A distance of more than four hundred years separates the two, and the England of A.D. 1307 was altogether a different country from the England of A.D. 901. Let us look at a single point, in the one case and in the other. Both Alfred and Edward I. were religious, were sincerely religious men. But they held two different religions. A few words will show this.

England was then, at the earliest of these dates (A.D. 871–901), probably in her darkest time, in her time of deepest ignorance. Alfred himself, a prince, is reported to have learned to read only in his twelfth year. And he himself, speaking of

* Bishop Short's History, p. 33.



the priests, said, "When I began to reign I cannot remember one, south of the Thames, who could explain his service-book in English." Hence, naturally, as soon as, by many battles, he had subdued the Danes, and found himself in quiet possession of his kingdom, his first, his chief object, was to commence a system of education, by which every "free-born youth" should abide at his book till he could well understand English writing.

He established such schools, and sought everywhere for teachers. He gave one-third of his time to literary pursuits, translating for his people the best books he could find: "Bede's Church History," "Orosius's Universal History," "Boethius's Consolations of Philosophy," "Gregory's Pastoral Care," "Gatherings from Augustine," "The King's Proverbs," and the "Psalter," upon which he was at work at the time of his death.

His will we possess, a copy having been preserved, and twice or thrice printed in the course of the last two centuries. It resembles, in all important points, the wills made by men of estate in the present day. He devises eight manors to one, three to another. All his children are thus provided for. After many such provisions, there follows a bequest resembling many which we now hear of, almost every week of every year. He

gives 200 pounds,* to be thus divided :—“50 to the mass-priests all over the kingdom :† 50 to the poor ministers of God. 50 to the distressed poor : 50 to the church that I shall rest at.”

Let it be observed that nothing is bequeathed for “Masses for the Dead,” nor for “Papal Indulgences.” The fact being, that these things were scarcely known in Alfred’s day.

We turn then, next, to the other king—the only one, it is reasonably said, “who can bear for a moment the comparison with Alfred.” This is “the great Edward”—Edward I.

This prince, we have said, was a religious man, as sincerely religious as Alfred. But the religion taught by Rome, and by the Romish clergy, in A.D. 1274–1307, was a very different one from that which Alfred had learned in A.D. 871–901. Edward’s religion was seen in various words and deeds, which we will briefly describe.

When held as a prisoner by Simon, Earl of Montfort, a vow was offered, and the pilgrimage to the Holy Land was the fulfilment of that vow.

On another occasion he was playing a game of chess with a friend. Rising from his seat, during

* This, by the change in the value of money, would be equal to 3,000 pounds in the present day.

† Bede was a “mass-priest”: that is, a priest ordained to dispense the Lord’s Supper. “The poor ministers” are our deacons.

a pause, a huge stone from an adjacent wall fell upon the place where he had been sitting. A pilgrimage to some venerated shrine was immediately vowed, and given without any delay. All such "pilgrimages" implied a liberal offering.

In the middle of his reign, A.D. 1286, Edward paid a visit to the Continent, for the settlement of divers matters. These affairs detained him there until August, 1289, when he landed at Dover. His first acts were of a religious character. While abroad, he had, twice or thrice, experienced deliverances from great danger. His earliest visit, therefore, was paid to the Abbey of St. Edmund's-bury, there to perform "the vows made while he was in trouble."

But now there came in sight the chief trouble of his life. His beloved Eleanor, after an union of five-and-thirty years, was seized, in the autumn of A.D. 1290, with a fever, of which she died, at Hardby, in Lincolnshire. After a silence of several days, the king proceeded on a journey occupying more than a week, to convey his beloved consort to Westminster for interment. He then retired to Ashridge, to a monastery which had the reputation of possessing "a few drops of the precious blood of Jesus." There he remained in retirement until the 26th of January, 1291—a long seclusion for a man of such active habits.

Returning to London, he proceeded to give the necessary orders concerning the tomb, the crosses, &c., and especially the Masses, which he, like all other religious men of that time, considered it necessary to order, for “the repose of the soul of the departed.” He called the superiors of the Abbey Church of Westminster to his aid, and commanded “perpetual prayers and alms” for the repose of the soul of the departed queen. For the support of these he gave to this Church three manors in Warwickshire, and three others, in Kent, in Bucks, and in Essex. Thus a large amount of annual rental was at once added to the income of that Church, in payment for the prayers which they covenanted to offer up.

All this was “Religion,” but it was a religion of which Alfred, four hundred years before, had never heard. It was a religion by means of which the Romish Church and clergy, in the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, had grown and were growing enormously rich. On this point let us listen, for a few moments, to one of the Romish Saints of the twelfth century —St. Bernard, who lived between A.D. 1091 and 1153. “He died,” says Dean Waddington,* “just before the era commenced of the Church’s proudest triumphs, and perhaps of its deepest crimes.”

* Dean Waddington’s Church History, p. 325.

Masses for the dead and Papal indulgences were now beginning to make the Church, which had been poor in the ninth century, shamefully rich in the twelfth and thirteenth. In one of his works* (*“de Consideratio”*), Bernard thus writes :

“ Is it *devotion*, I ask, which now wears out the apostolic threshold, or is it *ambition*? Does not the pontifical palace, throughout the long day, resound with *that* voice ? The contagion spreads through the whole Church, and the wider it spreads the more hopeless is the remedy. Thence that meretricious splendour everywhere visible ; the gold on their reins, their saddles, their spurs ; their tables, splendid with dishes and cups ; their cellars overflowing with wine.” †

In another place he asks—

“ Is this a proof of humility, to ride forth with such pomp and cavalcade ; to be followed by such an obsequious train ? I have seen an Abbot with a suite of sixty horsemen or more ! ”

St. Bernard describes the Churches of the Continent. Chaucer, a century or two later, tells the same story of the English. And yet, such was the practical working of the belief in “ Masses for the Dead,” that the wealth of the Church continually

* *Bernardi de Consideratio*, Book iii.

† *Super Cantica : Serm. xxxiii.*

grew. That which led one of the wisest of our kings to give, as we have just seen, six manors at once to a single abbey, as a fitting payment for Masses for the soul of his departed wife, would lead, year by year, all men possessed of land or money, to pour continually fresh gifts into the treasuries of the Church, for the rescue of their own souls, or the souls of their relatives, from the terrible flames of Purgatory. And hence, we read, without surprise, in Hume's history, written a century ago, that—

“At one time it was computed that *one-third of all the land of England* had been thus transferred.”

More recently, Dean Milman, touching on the same point, said—

“At one period there were in England 53,225 military fiefs, or estates, of which the ecclesiastics and religious bodies held 28,000. Another account, taken at a different period, makes the knight's fees 60,215, of which the clergy held 23,115.”*

We have already given, from Bernard, a writer declared to be a “Saint” by the Church of Rome, his estimate of the wealth and luxury of the monastic orders. Another view of the same fact is given in the pages of Giraldus Cambrensis, a

* Milman's Latin Christianity, vol. ix. p. 18.

writer of the twelfth century, whose works we still possess.

He tells us how, returning from abroad, he stopped at Canterbury, and dined with the monks. He describes the dinner. It is curious as a picture of the times. Sixteen lordly dishes: Fish of various kinds—roast and boiled, stewed and fried, omelets, seasoned meats, and other provocatives of the palate; wines in profusion: sicera, piment, claret, must, mead, and mulberry. He could only ask himself, “What would St. Anthony or St. Benedict have said to all this?” *

Our own Chaucer, a century or two later, describes a monk, whom he met in a large company, starting on a pilgrimage to Canterbury. He had doubtless seen many such.

“A monk there was ; full skilful in the chase ;
A bold rider ;—no better in that place.
A manly man,—to be an Abbot able :
Full many a daintie horse had he in stable.

He was a lord full fat, and in good point :
His boots souple ; his horse in great estate :
Now certainly he was a fair prelate :

A fat swan loved he best of any roast :
His palfrey was as brown as is a berry.’

One other circumstance may be adduced, as evincing the great and solid advance of the

* Blunt's Reformation in England, p. 34.

Church in these centuries—the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth. Not long after the close of the fifteenth, Henry VIII. ascended the throne, and, after many years' devotion to the Papacy, he quarrelled with the Pontiff, and threw off his allegiance to him. Very soon after, he saw it to be necessary to abolish the monasteries, which were nothing else than Popish garrisons. He sent to them Royal Commissioners of Inquiry. These soon reported these places to be, for the most part, haunts of vice; and their confiscation was ordered. Their number was found to be about eleven hundred, and many of them were large and splendid, equal to baronial castles or princely dwellings. And the revenues of the whole eleven hundred were found to be, in the aggregate, *one-third more* than the whole incomes of *all the 8331 parochial benefices of the whole kingdom*. Yet nearly the whole of these great monastic establishments for all England had been upreared in the short space of three or four centuries, by the working of the single fiction of “Masses for the Dead !”

A false religion had done this, just as another false religion, in the East, had created an empire of many kingdoms, dating from the Hegira, or flight of Mahomet, A.D. 622. “At the end of the first century, after the Hegira,” writes Gibbon,

"the Caliphs were the most potent and absolute monarchs of the globe. Under the last of the Ommiades, the Arabian empire extended two hundred days' journey from East to West, from the confines of Tartary and India to the shores of the Atlantic."* The foundation-falsehood of Mohammedism was, "Mahomet is the prophet of God." The foundation-falsehood of the Papacy was, "A thousand Masses said, and duly paid for, will confer a prodigious benefit upon a soul, supposed to be suffering in the flames of Purgatory." Both of these fictions were entirely destitute of the least shade of proof.

* Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, chap. li.

IV.

A LINGERING HOPE.

WE must not, however, forget the unquestionable fact that, amidst all these growing corruptions throughout Europe, a few,—a very few, saints of God were here and there to be seen. Anselm, in A.D. 1033–1109; Grossetete, in A.D. 1175–1253; Fitzralph, in A.D. 1359, and Bradwardine, in A.D. 1349, stand forth, as men of whose piety there can be no doubt. But may we not accommodate to this fact the New Testament words: “What are these among so many?”

A few words, which we find in the history of Israel, may bring us hope and comfort. When Elijah, in danger of despair, cries out, “I, even I only, am left, and they seek my life, to take it away!”—the reply, which he hears from heaven, is, “Nay, yet have I left me seven thousand in Israel—knees which have not bowed unto Baal—mouths which have not kissed him.”

The two books of Kings surely bring us some hope; when, reviewing the fearful history of Eng-

land in the days of the Conquest, of the Angevins, and of the Plantagenets, the resemblance is so evident. What can be worse than such days as those of Ahab and Jezebel, of Athaliah and of Ahaz? Still (as in England, twenty centuries after), we read, in the books of Kings, of Elijah, B.C. 918-896; of Elisha, in B.C. 891-838; of Jonah, in B.C. 862; of Hosea, in B.C. 790-725; of Isaiah, B.C. 760-695, and of Jeremiah, B.C. 629-588. Three centuries in England, between William I. and Edward III., resemble greatly three centuries in Israel, between the days of Jeroboam and those of Manasseh.

We must not, however, be content with merely naming the few eminent and earnest men who left their Christian faith on record between A.D. 1060 and A.D. 1349. A few words must be given to each.

1. Anselm was not an Englishman, but he became Archbishop of Canterbury in A.D. 1093. He was born at Aosta, and became Prior of Bec in A.D. 1060. Joseph Milner says:—

“ He was the first of characters in that century.” “ His private life was purely his own—originating from the honest and good heart with which, through grace, he was eminently endowed.”* “ We find the essential and leading doctrines of

* Milner’s Church Hist. Cent. xi. c. 5.

real Christianity in the possession of Anselm ; and hence we are at no loss to account for the piety and virtue which rendered him the ornament of the times in which he lived.”*

Dean Milman thus writes of him :—

“ The profound devotion of his age was the all-absorbing passion of Anselm. The monastery was his home ; when he was forced into the Primate’s throne of England, his heart was still in the quiet Abbey of Bec. The theology of the Church, in all its most imperious dogmatism, was the irrefragable truth from which Anselm set out.”

“ But when Primate, Anselm, the monk, the philosopher, was as high, as impracticable a Churchman as the boldest or the haughtiest. Anselm’s was passive courage. Anselm’s was gentle endurance, but as unyielding, as impregnable as that of Lanfranc himself. He was a man whom no humiliation could humble ; privation, even pain, he bore not only with the patience, but with the joy of a monk. He was exiled ; he returned the same meek, unoffending, unimpassioned man.”†

“ The works of this great prelate,” says Milner, “ are partly scholastical; partly devotional. Taken together, they show him to have been eminently

* Milner, Church Hist. Cent. xi. c. 5.

† Milman’s Latin Christianity, vol. iii. pp. 357, 439.

endowed with genius and piety. Like Augustine (of Hippo), whom he seems to have followed as his model, he abounds both in profound argumentation on abstruse and difficult subjects, and in devout and fervent meditations on practical godliness.”*

2. Anselm appears to have died in A.D. 1114 ; and Grossetete to have been born in A.D. 1175. He was elected, in A.D. 1235, to the extensive bishopric of Lincoln. It seems but too evident that both the clergy and the people, during the reigns of the Norman kings, were losing ground both in morals and religion. Hence the gift of such a bishop, when the clergy were growing daily more and more inert and superstitious, was a boon of the highest value.

“The days were evil,” says Milner, “and this zealous bishop could not give countenance to the secular clergy, who were ignorant and vicious, in preference to the Friars ; and in his zeal for promoting godliness, he was glad of these new assistants, who seemed most ready to co-operate with his own intentions.”

Bishop Short thus describes these new Orders :—

“The mendicant orders (or Friars) infested the Church chiefly in the thirteenth century. They pretended to an extraordinary call from God to

* Milner, Cent. xi. chap. 5.

reform the world, and correct the faults of the Secular Clergy. To this end they put on a mighty show of zeal for the good of men's souls, and of contempt for the world—accusing the Secular Clergy of famishing the souls of men ; calling them “dumb dogs” and “cursed hirelings”; maintaining that evangelical poverty became the ministers of the Gospel ; that it was unlawful for them to possess anything, or to retain property in any worldly goods. As for the public orders of the Church, they would not be tied to them, alleging that they themselves, being wholly spiritual, could not be obliged to any carnal ordinances. They broke in everywhere upon the parochial clergy ; usurped their office ; in all populous and rich places set up altars of their own ; withdrew the people from communion with their parish-priests, and would scarcely allow the hope of salvation to any but their own disciples. These artifices raised their reputation so high in a few years, that they wanted very little to ruin the Secular Clergy, and therewith the Church.”*

In his earlier years at Oxford, Grossetete had seen the Dominicans and Franciscans in their first-born zeal, and he had been attracted by it. But as the years passed over, misgivings arose, and for these misgivings he soon had abundant

* Bishop Short's History, p. 53.

reason. England had long been regarded at Rome as a field out of which the Papacy might often gather golden harvests. In A.D. 1247 two Franciscan Friars visited England, with instructions and credentials empowering them to gather money for the Pope. From the diocese of Lincoln they expected, and claimed, a contribution of 6,000 marks (equal to some £50,000 in the present day). But Bishop Grossetete was indignant at this claim, and dismissed them with an absolute refusal.

He thenceforth was at war at home and abroad. His own Chapter at Lincoln were in rebellion against him ; as for the Pope, he twice summoned the Bishop to appear personally at his bar. Still, the Pontiff could not prevent him from reading, in full Consistory, a memorial against the abuses of the Court of Rome ; its avarice and venality ; its usurpations and exemptions. Nay, Pope Innocent IV. even, to pacify him, issued a decree against the refractory Chapter of Lincoln, and conceded to him ample powers to reform his diocese.*

“ Nevertheless, on his return, even the firm mind of Grossetete was shaken by the difficulties of his position ; he at first meditated retirement, but he shook off the unworthy thought, and commenced and carried through a visitation of his diocese, of unprecedented severity.”

* Dean Milman’s Latin Christianity, vol. iv. p. 470.

But the Pope had not the slightest intention that the Bishop of Lincoln should apply his desired reforms to the Roman Court and Government. Soon Grossetete received command, through the Papal Nuncio, to confer a canonry of Lincoln on Pope Innocent's nephew, a boy—Frederick of Louvain. His answer was a firm, resolute, augmentative refusal. “I am bound by filial reverence to obey all commands of the Apostolic See ; but those are not Apostolic commands which are not consonant to the doctrine of the Apostles, or of the Master of the Apostles, Christ Jesus.”*

In a passion of wrath the Pope exclaimed :—

“Who is this old dotard who presumes to judge our acts ?” The Cardinals pleaded, “He is held to be a great philosopher, deeply learned, a reader in theology, a devout preacher.” But thenceforward the Pope and the Bishop of Lincoln remained foes, or, at least, antagonists. Sentence of excommunication was soon fulminated, and Albert, one of the Papal Nuncios, was nominated to the Bishopric of Lincoln. Next, what the Cardinals had feared, came to pass ; the Pope’s commands were universally disregarded : Grossetete remained quietly in his bishopric.

But in the autumn of that year, he was seized

* Dean Milman, vol. iv. p. 471.

with a fatal disease, which, in a few months, removed him from all worldly disputes and troubles.

In October he had conversations with his chaplains. "Christ," he remarked, "came into the world to save souls; ought not he who takes pains to ruin souls, to be denominated anti-Christ? Is not the destroyer of souls the anti-Christ, the enemy of God?"

He died at Buckden, October 9, 1253. When Pope Innocent heard of his death, he exclaimed with exultation, "Let every true son of the Roman Church rejoice with me, that my great enemy is removed!"

But when Matthew Paris, our English chronicler, and a monk, recorded the Bishop's death, he wrote thus:—

"The holy Bishop Robert departed this world, which he never loved, and which was to him a place of banishment. He was the open reprobate, both of my lord the Pope, and of the King; and the censurer of prelates, the corrector of monks, the instructor of the clergy, the preacher to the laity. At the temporal table, liberal, polite, cheerful, and affable; at the spiritual table, devout, humble, and contrite; in the episcopal office, diligent, venerable, and indefatigable."

In summing up his character, Joseph Milner says:—

“In general he was eloquent and mighty in the Scriptures ; fervent in spirit ; speaking and teaching boldly the things of the Lord ; though, like Apollos, he sometimes needed an ‘Aquila and Priscilla to expound to him the way of God more perfectly.’”

3. Another remarkable man, of this period, is Richard Fitzralph, of whom little is said as to his life in England, but who was made Archbishop of Armagh in A.D. 1347, and who died at Avignon in 1359. As he was Chancellor of the University of Oxford in A.D. 1333, seven years before Wycliffe, as a youth, first visited that university—we must date his birth in the latter years of the preceding century. He wrote, in A.D. 1350, at the request of several bishops, a large work, “*De Erroribus Armenorum*,”* but this book, having little interest for Englishmen, has seldom been alluded to.

We chiefly know him by his controversy with the Friars—the mendicant orders. They troubled him greatly in Armagh ; and, visiting London, and being asked to preach on this topic, he delivered, in St. Paul’s Cathedral, seven or eight sermons “On the Poverty of Jesus.” He showed that the Saviour while on earth, though always poor, never practised begging—never taught any one to beg, &c., &c.

* *The Errors of the Church of Armenia.*

It is tolerably evident that this eminent and earnest man was a leading opponent in his day of the Mendicant Orders. Whether at Armagh, or in London, or Oxford, he was a resolute, a declared opponent. But the Friars had friends and protectors at Rome, and they soon succeeded in drawing forth from the Papal Court a summons addressed to Fitzralph, commanding him to come to Avignon, to defend himself before Innocent VI. His discourse, which has been called a "Defence of the Parish Priests," argues the question, first, from scripture, and from the example of Christ; and, secondly, by contrasting the position and the usages of the parochial clergy, and of the begging-friars.

The Friars, however, knew how to deal with him. They succeeded in procuring a delay of the Papal judgment, and thus detained the poor archbishop in Avignon until, in December, 1359, he died.

Among the papers left by the dying prelate was a prayer, or confession, reviewing his past life, and acknowledging the divine goodness by which he had been "extricated from the vanities of the Aristotelian system, and brought to the study of the scriptures of God." This confession opens thus:—

"To Thee be praise, glory and thanksgiving, O

Jesus most holy, most powerful, most precious ; thou who hast said, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life.' A way without error, truth without a cloud, and life without end. For Thou thyself hast shown me the way ; Thou thyself hast taught me the truth ; and Thou thyself hast promised me the life : Thou wast my way in exile ; my truth in counsel ; and Thou wilt be my life in reward ! " *

That these earnest aspirations were heaven-sent, and that they were graciously received, are not subjects on which any doubt can rest.

4. The last of these four remarkable men, who preceded Wycliffe and the Reformation, was Thomas Bradwardine, who died Archbishop of Canterbury in A.D. 1349. As he was a proctor of the University of Oxford in A.D. 1325, "it is concluded, on good grounds, that he must have been born about A.D. 1290. Of his early years we know nothing, except that he himself observes, 'that his father lived at Chichester.' " †

He was regarded, in his day, as a master in several departments—especially in mathematics and in theology. Lecturing before the university on this last subject, he delivered a series of discourses on "The Cause of God against Pelagius." They were greatly admired, and "the author, at the request of the students of Merton College,

* Le Bas's Wycliff, p. 82. † Lechler, vol. i. p. 90.

arranged and enlarged them ; while residing in London as chancellor of the diocese. No sooner was the book rendered accessible, than it found its way into almost every library in Europe."*

This elaborate work soon gained for its author the designation of "the Profound." But the printing-press had not yet been constructed, and hence this large volume remained in the libraries until A.D. 1618, when Archbishop Abbott of Canterbury suggested to Sir Henry Savile, warden of Merton College, the desirableness of a printed edition, which was accordingly produced in a folio of 900 pages.

The author, though styled by others, "the Profound," was a man of "recluse and sedentary life," and of modest and innocent manners. When the king, Edward III., went to the wars in France, it was at Archbishop Stratford's recommendation that he commanded Bradwardine's attendance as his chaplain and confessor. While the army was in France, Stratford died, and the chapter of Canterbury, knowing what his opinion of Bradwardine had been, requested of the king that he would grant them his chaplain as the successor. "But the king's attachment to him was such that he could not consent to part with him." The chapter, therefore, sought elsewhere, but, being

* Milner, Cent. xiv. chap. 2.

disappointed, they a second time made choice of Bradwardine. The king now yielded, and Bradwardine was consecrated. But he had not taken up his abode at Lambeth many weeks before a sudden illness removed him from this life.

Milner, citing several passages from his great work, says, "Such were the breathings of soul in a studious and thoughtful scholar of the fourteenth century ; who, in an age dreary and unpromising, and in our own island full of darkness, seems to have lived a life of faith on the Son of God."*

As to the great question to which he devoted his mind for months and years ; the conclusions to which he was brought differed in no respect from those which we find in our own Book of Common Prayer, handed down to us by Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer. In one prayer we are taught to ask :—

" Almighty God, who seest that we have no power of ourselves, to help ourselves ; keep us both outwardly in our bodies and inwardly in our souls."

In another :—

" O God, forasmuch as without Thee we are not able to please Thee ; mercifully grant that thy Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts ; through Jesus Christ our Lord."

* Milner, Cent. xiv. chap. 2.

And when we turn, for certainty and accuracy, to the great confession and declaration of faith, the Thirty-nine Articles, we find the point on which Pelagius erred, thus distinctly defined and set forth.

“The condition of man after the fall of Adam is such that he cannot turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and good works, to faith and calling upon God. Wherefore we have no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God by Christ preventing us, that we may have a good will ; and working with us, when we have that good will.”

Nor was Bradwardine, in handling this great question, confining himself to mere theory. He himself tells us :—

“I was, while a student of philosophy, far from the knowledge of God ; held captive in error. I heard theologians disputing of grace and free-will, and the party of Pelagius appeared to me to have the best of the argument. But, after a while, the truth conveyed in Romans ix., ‘So, then, it is not in him that willeth, nor in him that runneth, but in God that showeth mercy’ struck upon me like a beam of light ; and I seemed to see the grace of God who wills, and the power of God who works this merit ; God being in all these movements, the primary mover.”

Pausing, however, here, and looking back upon these four remarkable men, who had been, each in his turn, something like a star in the darkness of Norman and Angevin midnight, a question forces itself on the mind—Was there, among them all, a captain, a leader, a statesman? One of the same class as Alfred, as Edward I., or even as Cromwell or William III.?

David, in his youth, was little thought of, “There remaineth yet the youngest, and behold, he keepeth the sheep.” (1 Sam. xvi. 11.) But, when that same David was grown to be a man, and king of Israel, he sent to learn the number of his armies, and he found that he had more than a million of men at his command.

Nor, if we turn from the Inspired Records to Secular or ordinary history, do we fail to observe the same fact, though it is not of frequent occurrence. Such names as those of Alexander of Macedon, of Julius Cæsar, and of Charlemagne, remind us of the existence of a small, a rare class of men, whose appearance at distant intervals affects, in a very important manner, what we call “the fortunes of mankind.” In the present instance we read, with deep interest and sometimes with admiration, the thoughts and words of Anselm, of Grossetete, of Fitzralph, and of Bradwardine; but when they successively pass

away, we are forced to admit, that they have left the world much as they found it. For the accomplishment of the divine purposes a different sort of man was needed ; and in due time such a man was raised up. His history was quite unlike theirs. Each of these four, without manifesting ambition, came to occupy high position in the world ; and yet, as we have said, they produced in the world no mighty change. A man was about to appear from among the middle classes who, offering himself for a scholarship in an Oxford college, should die, forty-four years after, the rector of a quiet country parish, without having gained either rank, or wealth, or power ; but who had worked, in less than twenty years, a change in England far exceeding, in intrinsic importance, the results of any other single life that this land has ever seen.

But we are falling below the truth--the fact. Ought we not to learn from the plain teaching of Holy Scripture ? When God began to deal with men in their nations He spoke very plainly to them. He called to a man feeding a flock, and told him, go unto the children of Israel and say unto them, “The Lord God of your fathers *hath sent me unto you.*” (Exod. iii. 15.)

After the death of Joshua “the children of Israel forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth.” But again was mercy shown. “The

Lord called Samuel," and after a while "all Israel knew that Samuel was established to be a prophet of the Lord." (1 Sam. iii.)

When Samuel's end drew near, the Lord said unto him, "I will send thee to Jesse the Bethlehemite ; for I have provided me a king among his sons." (1 Kings xvi.)

Not to dwell too long upon individual cases, we will briefly mention Isaiah, "hearing the voice of the Lord ; and he said, Go and tell this people" (Isa. vi.). Jeremiah, "hearing the word of the Lord" (chap. xlivi., &c.), and most of the prophets distinctly sent, "Go, and tell this people." In the New Testament, among a multitude of instances, the case of Paul stands pre-eminent. He was made, in a very few years, one of the foremost men, if not quite the foremost, of all that it had pleased God to send forth to build up his Church. But was either his new birth or his new life the result of his own choice, or his own endeavour ? Far from it—rather, as far as possible from it.

Paul, when "dead in sins" was "quickened together with Christ," and "made to sit in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." (Ephes. ii. 5, 6.) He was "delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son."

And hence, when he feels obliged to speak of himself, it is in such words as these :—

“ I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling: and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man’s wisdom; but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power.”

“ These things we speak, not in the words which man’s wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual.”
(1 Cor. ii.)

“ We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus’ sake.”
(2 Cor. iv.)

“ Being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted to you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.” (1 Thess. ii.)

Bishop Short, in reviewing the period now before us, observes that—

“ Perhaps, in examining the steps which led to the Reformation, too much stress is sometimes laid upon the individuals who stood forward in the cause; and the connection between those who succeeded each other, is traced with a minuteness which tends to cloud the truth. Grossetete and Fitzralph, Wycliffe and Lord Cobham, may have advanced the Reformation among us; but he who will behold the truth must look beyond these instruments to their great Artificer.”

Assuredly, the Church which began to appear, and to do the greatest of all works in the world, in the days of the Apostles, never had a more efficient worker than Saul of Tarsus. But how can we understand or appreciate that astonishing history, except we read and ponder over the narrative given us in the ninth chapter of the Acts? And that chapter, though a most striking one, does not stand alone. The call sent to Augustine of Hippo, the chief teacher of the Church of the middle ages; the impulse felt by Gregory of Rome to bring back England to the faith of Christ, were of the same nature as the arrestation of Saul. And now we are to behold one more, different in features, but of one and the same kind, and hardly of less moment, than the three great interventions of the Divine Power of which we have just spoken.

ENGLAND'S TRAINING.

THE REFORMATION.

JOHN WYCLIFFE.

- I.—PREFATORY.
- II.—YOUTH AND EDUCATION OF JOHN WYCLIFFE.
- III.—BEGINNING OF HIS PUBLIC LIFE.
- IV.—RETIREMENT TO LUTTERWORTH.
- V.—THE CLOSE.

I.

PREFATORY.

FOR a few moments, before entering upon the story of the life and works of an eminent man, let us cast a glance around, and endeavour to gain a clear idea of the state and condition of England, and of Europe generally, in that important crisis which was evidently approaching. During the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries, the growth of the Papacy, and the thralldom of the Church which submitted to the Papacy, had been continuous and disheartening. From Bernard, who lived A.D. 1091-1153, we have already taken a few sentences of warning. "He died," says Dean Waddington, "just before the era of the Church's proudest triumphs and its deepest crimes." Those men who were qualified to form an opinion were beginning to express plainly and openly their conviction, that an emergency of some sort must be drawing near.

Nor did the Popes themselves venture to deny the existence of evils *within* the Church. Thus, in A.D. 1274, Gregory X. called a Council "for the

reforming of the discipline of the Church and the lives of the clergy." And in A.D. 1311 a similar proceeding is recorded : a Council, one of whose purposes was "to reform the manners of the clergy, and the system of the Church." But, practically, these attempts at reform were limited to the inferior orders of the clergy ; the pontiffs and cardinals were left untouched. The claims of the Popes were always increasing. Boniface VIII. issued a Bull in A.D. 1296, in which "he forbade the clergy to pay any tax or tribute to the lay authorities without the permission of the Pope ; and enjoined all kings and princes to exact nothing from the people, except with the Papal approval."* At the same time, "a vast number of benefices in England were filled by Italians, who resided abroad, and impoverished the realm by the incomes thus withdrawn from it."†

These scandals were brought before the Council held in A.D. 1311 ; in which Council complaint was made—

" That many persons, deficient alike in learning and in morals, were now admitted to the priesthood.

" That prebends and other dignities often filled up by the Pope, were usually presented to strangers and foreigners ; men of loose morals.

* Dupin.

† Bishop Short's History, p. 42.

“That many benefices were held in plurality ; often four or five, sometimes as many as a dozen, by one person.*

“The luxury in which these higher clergy lived, and the negligence with which the divine services were performed, was another complaint ; and

“The profligacy and simony, openly practised at the Roman Court, crowned the list of deformities.”†

The canons of this Council “imposed greater decency on the *lower* orders of the clergy ; but the chief and vital mischiefs, from which the minor evils sprang, were left to flourish untouched.”

One natural result of this state of things, and of Rome’s unwillingness to reform itself, was soon seen in England, as well as in some other countries. In Edward I.’s reign, and in the reign of his grandson, these growing demands and claims of the Church were frequently giving occasion—sometimes to the statesmen, sometimes to the Parliaments—for discussions and for complaints, in which men of experience and of understanding would frankly express their apprehensions that such a state of things must end, before long, in some terrible catastrophe.

* William of Wykeham, in England, held twelve livings at one time.

† Dean Waddington’s History, p. 480, 481.

The Great Disposer of events, however, was preparing a remedy, and that near at hand, of which, we may be sure, no human mind had formed any idea or expectation.

II.

YOUTH AND EDUCATION OF JOHN WYCLIFFE.

FROM the days of the Conquest down to those of the Plantagenets there had dwelt in a small village near Richmond, in Yorkshire, a family giving its name to the place (or taking its name from it), "the Wycliffes of Wycliffe." The head of this family was lord of the manor, and patron of the living. He occupied the manor-house, and was, of necessity, the chief man of the place. But, residing in one village for centuries, it followed, as a matter of course, that collateral branches of this family soon showed themselves in the country around.

Leland, of the days of Henry VIII. and Cardinal Wolsey, was prompted, or ordered, to make an Itinerary, and that book still exists. While spending some time in Richmondshire he remarks that "It is reported that John Wiclit, the heretic,* was born at Spresswell, a good mile off."

* So Wolsey would have styled him ; and so also would some of his own cousins.

Recent enquiries have told us that some such hamlet did exist, even so lately as in the eighteenth century ; but that, since then, it has disappeared. It is easy, therefore, to understand that a branch of "the family," a cousin of the lord of the manor, may have dwelt at the beginning of the fourteenth century at the hamlet of Spresswell, either as tenant of some portion of the estate, or as taking part in the management of the property.

The youth, John Wycliffe, a son of this Spresswell family, had clerical relatives. In A.D. 1362 we find a Robert Wycliffe appointed parish priest of Wycliffe, by Catherine, widow of Roger de Wycliffe. At Oxford, also, there were one or two of the same name. Young John Wycliffe might easily, by assiduity, gain the good opinion of the priest of the parish, or of a monk in some neighbouring monastery. By their kindness he might obtain access to books of the highest value—the Latin Vulgate, the writings of Augustine, of Jerome, of Bede, and of Anselm. All writers who have attempted to describe him agree that he was a youth of "immense energy," of "great ardour," of "intense convictions."* Most natural, then, was it, that he should desire, above all things, to "go to Oxford ;" and should spend his time

* Green's History, Waddington, Le Bas, &c.

in his youthful days in preparing for that first stage of his life. His friends, too, would be sure to tell him of a new College, to be called "Queen's," which was soon to open its doors, and which would gladly receive at once an earnest aspirant such as he evidently was.

All through modern times, during the literary careers of the Milners, of Bishop Short, Dean Waddington, Dean Milman, and Dr. Vaughan, there has been no doubt or dispute respecting the early days of John Wycliffe at Oxford. Born in or about A.D. 1324, he presented himself in 1340 at Queen's College, and was at once admitted. But, soon after, he migrated to Merton College, where his needful training was completed. In 1360 or 1361 Balliol College offered him its Mastership, and in 1365 Archbishop Islip appointed him to the Wardenship of Canterbury Hall, he being then in his forty-first year. On these points, as we have said, there has been no difference of opinion until within the last dozen years. But, in our own day, two German writers of talent and learning have made "Wycliffe" their subject, and since their friendly intentions have been as evident as their capability, we can hardly wonder at the kind and degree of success which they have obtained; even while it threw doubt on the English belief of all previous days, and tried to set up in its room

a theory resting mainly upon mere hypothesis and surmise.

Having said thus much, it seems needful to give in the most compressed form, first, the Oxford testimony of the last five centuries ; and then the theory—for it is nothing more—which has been offered to us in its room by two learned men of Leipsic University.

And here we must call to mind that for a full century after Wycliffe's death the state of England in various ways was nothing less than deplorable. For several years the prelates, Courtenay, Arundell, &c., acting under orders from Rome, were organizing and bringing into play a system of persecution. Two or three censures of Wycliffe himself they had obtained ; but, to the wonder of most historians, this first of the Reformers was carried to his grave undisturbed, struck down by paralysis in the midst of the service of his own parish-church. After his removal, the work of suppression by increased persecutions went on more and more vigorously ; rebuked and punished at last by that great national calamity—the Wars of the Roses. It was only in the hundred and first year after Wycliffe's departure that the beginning of the Tudor dynasty ushered in a very different state of things. During the disastrous century which had passed, there could have been

no history, properly so called ; but among many other inestimable gifts to the human race which were sent at this remarkable period, was that of the printing-press ; and in the performances of William Caxton the English people saw the first gleam of an entirely altered state of things. Not until then could they have begun to look back with understanding—with conviction—upon the marvellous history of the greatest man known in Oxford in the Plantagenet times.

Of what Oxford then said of him ; of the traditions then left of him, from the days of Edward III. and Richard II., let us now briefly speak.

John Leland was born about the time when Caxton was departing. Henry VIII. made him his “Antiquary,” and bid him write an “Itinerary of England.” In it he speaks of “Wycliffe, the heretic,”* as having been born at Spresswell. In another of his works he cites Bishop Barlow (one of the prelates who consecrated Archbishop Parker), as saying, “John Wycliffe was communar of Queen’s College ; after that probationer of *Merton* ; and the Head of Canterbury College.”

William Camden, the antiquary of Queen Eliza-

* The family of the Wycliffes, residing at the Manor House, always so regarded him.

beth's days, was born in A.D. 1551. In his "Britannia," he says of Wycliffe :—

"This great man was of the north country : he was born at Wycliffe, in Richmondshire, about A.D. 1324 ; educated at *Merton* College in Oxford ; doctor in divinity ; master of Balliol College, and afterwards of Archbishop Islip's new foundation at Canterbury Hall."

Dr. James was twenty years junior to Camden, being born in A.D. 1571. He was keeper of the Bodleian Library in A.D. 1608. He had lived through most of Elizabeth's reign. Those churchmen who disliked the Puritans, disliked also the Lollards who preceded them. It is probable that this led Dr. James to write an "Apology for John Wycliffe." In this memoir he said :—

"John Wycliffe was born in the north, where, unto this day, some of his name and family do yet remain. He was brought up in Oxford, in *Merton College*, which hath justly had the pre-eminence. He was a follower of Occam, Bradwardine, Fitzralph, and Grosseteste. He began to be famous about A.D. 1360."

It is not easy to imagine, that a keeper of the Bodleian, who must have had free access to every record existing in Oxford, could write down such a simple statement as this, if there had been no truth in it.

Thomas Fuller was born in A.D. 1608, five years after Elizabeth's departure. He became Prebendary of Salisbury in 1631. He wrote a "Church History of Britain," in which, speaking of Wycliffe, he says, "History first meets with him as graduate of *Merton College* in Oxford."

Anthony Wood entered *Merton College* himself in A.D. 1647. Some years after, he began to put together a History of the University, and of its Colleges and Halls. In 1670 the delegates of the University Press purchased this from him; and some years after, it was published. In giving a history of Balliol College, he supplies a list of the masters. Among these we find, in its place, "Mr. John Wycliffe, *lately of Merton College*, appears to have been master of Balliol in 1361. He was afterwards guardian of Canterbury College."

Another circumstance noticed in Wood's "Annals of the University" deserves a passing notice. In describing A.D. 1377, he gives a rapid sketch of the strife then going on between Wycliffe and the prelates; and says:—

"Those of this university who held with Wycliffe were" (he gives a list of fourteen men, who were evidently all men of note). Among these fourteen we observe these five:—

Nicholas Hereford, *Queen's College*, Professor of Divinity.



Rob. Rugge, Master of *Merton*, Professor of Divinity.

John Aston, *Merton College*.

Tho. Brightwell, *Merton College*, Professor of Divinity.

William James, *Merton College*, Regent in Arts.

But we do not find, among the whole fourteen friends of Wycliffe, a single person belonging to Balliol College.

Bishop Tanner, born in A.D. 1674, was himself of *Queen's College*. He published, in 1748, his “Bibliotheca Britannica,” in which he copies and adopts Bishop Barlow's brief statement which we have given above ; that, “John Wycliffe was commoner of Queen's College ; after that probationer of Merton, and then head of Canterbury College.”

Mr. Lewis, Vicar of Margate, was born A.D. 1675, and published at the Oxford University Press in 1719, a life of John Wycliffe, in which he says :— “John Wycliffe was born, very probably, about the year 1324. He was sent to Oxford, and was first admitted commoner of Queen's College, then newly founded ; but was soon after removed to *Merton College*, where he was first probationer, and afterwards fellow.”

Obviously, we might add many more citations of this kind in the eighteenth century ; but it would justly be remarked that they merely copied from

each other. One writer of our day, however, may be allowed to offer a passing remark, inasmuch as the enquiry he was prosecuting was of a totally different character.

As recently as in A.D. 1866, Mr. Thorold Rogers was compiling a work on the agriculture and prices of former days; and he visited the universities because they possessed ancient records. Being at Merton College on this errand, he remarks that :—

“The fellows of Merton believed that Wycliffe was one of their body. He is specially designated in a list of the fellows compiled the first year of Henry VI. (A.D. 1422) and the date of his election is added to his name” (p. 23).

We can only repeat, then, that during the whole course of five hundred years, the testimony, the belief of Oxford, continued to be, without any doubt or hesitation, that Wycliffe’s university education was gained at Merton College, where he would have, for some considerable portion of the first nine years, “Bradwardine the Profound” for his friend and counsellor.

But now we must turn, for a few moments, to the entirely contrary hypothesis, which has been tendered to us during the last dozen years by Professors Lechler and Buddensieg, of Leipsic. We ought, perhaps, to say rather “by Dr. Lechler,” for Dr. Buddensieg does little more than assent.

Dr. L., then, begins by broadly asserting that *no documentary evidence exists*. Why, then, it may be asked, pursue the subject further; if nothing better than “surmises and probabilities” can be produced?

Dr. Lechler’s words are (p. 131):—

“If the question recurs into what college Wycliffe was received when he first came to Oxford, we must fairly confess it is one to which, in the absence of all documentary evidence, we are unable to supply any distinct or confident answer.”

(And yet, as the last editor of Foxe’s “*Acts and Monuments*” observes, “Wood, Wharton, Tanner, and Barlow all say that Wycliffe began his studies at *Merton College*.”)

But Dr. Lechler proceeds:—

“If mere conjectures might be allowed, nothing would appear to us more probable than that he *must have been entered at Balliol* on his first coming to the university” (p. 132).

How is this *probability* reached, or rather, this certainty,—this “must have been”? By observing that two men presented to the parish of Wycliffe, in 1361 and 1369, were both from Balliol College. Therefore, it appears to Dr. L. “that there existed a connection of some kind between the Wycliffe family and Balliol College.”

A more arbitrary inference—an inference less

warranted by the facts—surely was never drawn ! A patron of a small living goes to Balliol College to fill up a vacancy. A few years after, the church being again in want of a minister, he sends to Balliol for another. “This shows,” says Dr. L., “that there existed *a connection* of some kind between the family at Wycliffe and the college in Oxford.” Few people will see this: but even if the fact were so, it would not at all follow that the family at Spresswell must also have been influenced by this connection.

We return, then, to the Oxford tradition, recorded by writers of Henry VIII.’s reign ; by writers of Elizabeth’s reign ; and by writers of the Stuart times, and questioned by none ;—that to Merton College belongs the credit of Wycliffe’s education. Of the nature and character of that education, we shall feel it to be sufficient to copy the simple sketch given by Mr. Matthew, in his preface to the English works of the Reformer, printed a few years since. He thus describes the Oxford course as it was used in all the colleges in the fourteenth century.

“Four years were passed in verbal studies—(studies of language)—then, three full years must be given to science. These seven years won but an arts degree. Seven years more were needed

before, as a bachelor of theology, he could lecture on "The Sentences ;" and, lastly, he must study the Bible for three years, and lecture on one of the Canonical books, before he could come forth as a master or doctor of theology. Thus, the full course required at least seventeen years."*

Accepting, then, the belief, the judgment of Leland, of Camden, of James, of Thomas Fuller, of Bishop Barlow, of Anthony Wood, and of Bishop Tanner, that Wycliffe received his Oxford training in Merton College, we cannot, as we move forward, help expressing our wonder at the remark made by a modern historian on this period of the Reformer's life. It is this :—

"Nothing is more remarkable than the contrast between the obscurity of Wycliffe's earlier life, and the fulness and vividness of our knowledge of him during the twenty years which preceded its close."†

This "obscurity" arises from, and consists in, the seventeen years required, at that period, for the completion of an Oxford education. One characteristic of Wycliffe's mind and constitution was, its *thoroughness*. He was never half-hearted. He had gone to Oxford to learn all that Oxford could teach him ; and if Oxford prescribed seven-

* English Works of Wycliffe. F. D. Matthew, p. ii.

† Green's History, p. 228.

teen years as the course, he was prepared to give it. During all this long period, then, it is natural that we should find nothing more in Wycliffe than the patient, earnest student. Not, however, wholly silent. Fuller describes him as "living in tolerable quiet ; having a professor's place, and a cure of souls ; on the week-day in the schools, and on the Lord's-day in the pulpit." One result, however, was, that when this long course of study had been gone through, Wycliffe, a student of "immense energy," was seen and felt to be also a man of high attainments.

One of his Merton College friends, too, was pre-eminently fitted to recommend to him quiet but persevering study. Thomas Bradwardine's chief feature in the outline-history which has descended to us is,—that of "one of those humble and contemplative spirits, whose lives exhibit an image of almost celestial serenity and peace." "His habitual rigour of enquiry never impaired the humility of his temper or the warmth of his affections."* He would naturally be the Mentor of the young aspirant ; but his advice would assuredly be,—to press forward ; but to press forward noiselessly.

The gain, however, of all these quiet searchings remains unquestioned. The studies of John Wycliffe at Oxford commenced in or about

* Le Bas's Life of Wycliffe, p. 73, 75.

A.D. 1340 or 1341 ; they might have been silent studies, completed in 1358 or 1359, but a recognition of their result was seen when, in A.D. 1360 or 1361, Balliol College invited him to become its Master. Three or four years after, Archbishop Islip appointed him Warden of Canterbury Hall ; and from that time to the end of his life, no year —we might say, no month of his life—passed without some kind of strife and contention. Still, perhaps, we ought to add that all this contention was unsought, was undesired by him ; it came to him often from distant quarters.

Of the reality, of the intrinsic worth, of this education, traces are to be found in abundance in all parts of his very numerous writings. Nor is other testimony undiscoverable. Lewis in his biography, written two centuries ago, records a tradition that “Wycliffe is said to have committed to memory many of the more intricate portions of Aristotle ;” and Knyghton, one of the most earnest of his opponents, admits that “he was second to none in philosophy ; and in scholastic discipline quite incomparable.”

His own writings, however, furnish the best criterion of the nature and extent of Wycliffe's studies. “Mathematical sciences had an extraordinary attraction for him. At one time it is arithmetic or geometry which must do him ser-

vice ; at another time it is physical and chemical laws ; or facts of optics and acoustics. Even in his English sermons he makes unhesitating use of such illustrations." "He passed, however, from the seven liberal arts to theology. His passion for knowledge and his thirst for truth drew him to theology with all the more zeal ; regarding this as the queen of all the sciences."

Beginning with "the most distinguished Fathers of the Church—St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Basil, and St. Gregory,"* he passed on to the more recent divines, Bede and Anselm, Grossetete and Fitzralph. Nor could he neglect Peter Lombard and his "Book of Sentences," at that time the most esteemed of all the manuals.

It is refreshing, however, to observe, that which we might expect from a student of St. Augustine and a friend of "Bradwardine the profound." He assigns to the Scriptures their rightful place, their just supremacy. In his earlier writings, indeed, he speaks uncertainly and with some hesitation. He would seek truth from two sources, Reason and Revelation. He deems "Conscience and the Law of Nature" to be the standard ; but still he acknowledges Holy Scripture to be second to none. But in theology, as in all other subjects for study, he is *progressive*. In his

* Le Bas, p. 94.

“Treatise on the truth of Holy Scriptures,” he speaks more distinctly.

“Holy Scripture is the faultless, most true, and most holy law of God, which it is the duty of all men to learn, to know, to defend, and to observe.”

And in one of his latest works, “The Wicket,” he exclaims, “If God’s word be the life of the world, and every word of God be the life of the human soul, how may any Antichrist take it away from us that be Christian men, and leave the people to die for hunger !”

Turning inwards and speaking of his own experience he says, “At last the Lord, by the power of His grace, opened my mind to understand the Scriptures !”

And then we hear from a recent critic what we might have expected :—“Wycliffe’s knowledge of the Bible was astonishing. The number of Scripture passages which in a single work he explains and applies, is enough to show that he was, in an extraordinary degree, familiar with the Bible.”*

* Lechler’s Life of Wycliffe, vol. ii. p. 25.

III.

BEGINNING OF HIS PUBLIC LIFE.

THE year A.D. 1360 may be taken to be that which saw the opening of the portion of Wycliffe's life which may be termed "historical." In that year, or the next, we find him Master of Balliol College. If it be true that he *could not* consistently with its rules be appointed to that mastership except he had first been a Fellow, then, obviously, he might be elected Fellow in A.D. 1360, and Master in the following year.

The fact, however, is beyond dispute ; and we must add the description given by Anthony Wood, when he records his elevation to the Mastership : "Mr. John Wycliffe, *lately of Merton College.*"

Still, knowing from his after-life that he was a man of "immense energy," we cannot imagine that the time from his eighteenth to his thirty-sixth year had been entirely spent in silent study. A man who had given all his days and hours to solitary reading, would hardly have been thought of by a College of some importance as a suitable

man to become its president. There must have been college tutorships then, as there are now ; and curacies then, as there are now. Fuller had briefly alluded to these, in the passage we have already cited ; and Milner follows him, gathering his brief sketch of Wycliffe's earlier days from the chronicles of the time.

“ He seems to have reigned without a rival in public disputation, which were then in high repute. Such were his labours on the week-days ; proving to the learned the doctrine concerning which he intended to preach ; and on the Sundays he addressed the common people on the points which he had proved before.”* To which Dr. Lechler adds, “ He commenced while only a master of arts to give disputation and lectures on philosophical subjects.” He gave courses of such lectures with zeal and success. But when he became bachelor of theology he was at liberty to deliver theological lectures also. These lectures served as a preparation for his after-labours as a Reformer.”†

As we proceed we shall soon come to understand that the life of Wycliffe divides itself very distinctly into three parts : the first his college course, the acquisition of knowledge of various kinds ; the second, his public life—or, as we have called it—

* Milner's Church History, Cent. xiv. chap. 3.

† Lechler's Life of Wycliffe, vol. i. p. 159-160.

the historical portion. This may be taken to begin about A.D. 1360 and to end about 1374 with his return from Bruges. Then begins the third and last period ; his struggle with the Papacy, consisting of two parts. In A.D. 1375-6-7 the prelates strive to silence or even to crush him. In A.D. 1378 the Papal schism weakens and perplexes their movements. Wycliffe soon perceives the path which lies open to him : he sees also that Oxford, through the efforts of the prelates, is no longer, for him, the place that it had been. He retires to his parsonage at Lutterworth, and from thence directs his two great assaults on the "Anti-christ ;" which assaults were, in truth, the commencement of the REFORMATION.

And now we return to the opening of his public life when, in A.D. 1360 or 1361, he was called to the government of Balliol Collge.

Of his work in the mastership of that College we know but little. Whatever it was, it must have been brief. Entering upon this duty in A.D. 1361 or 1362, the negociations relative to Canterbury Hall must have begun not many months after ; and these must have disturbed his position and weakened his influence at Balliol.

The King had given his approval to the Archbishop's plan for another college in October, 1361, and in April, 1363, we hear of the charter of

foundation and the gift of the manor of Woodford. But a question immediately arose whether the Fellows should be monks or secular priests. At first Archbishop Islip appointed three monks to be Fellows ; then changing his mind he dismissed these ; and in December, 1365, he appointed Wycliffe to be Warden and three priests to be Fellows. But in the course of a few months after, the archbishop died.

His letter to Wycliffe nominating him to the mastership had been thus graciously worded :—

“ Simon Islip to his dear son John de Wycliffe,—

“ Having regard to your praiseworthy life and honourable conversation, and the literary acquirements with which the Most High has gifted you ; and being assured of your truth, prudence and carefulness, we commit to you this Wardenship.”

But Islip's successor, Simon Langham, was differently-minded. He had been himself a monk ; and he took the side of the monks in this controversy. He dismissed Wycliffe and his assistants, and appointed monks in their room. Wycliffe felt himself to be wronged, and took the only course which was open to him ; he sent an appeal to the Pope.

Such was the first trouble in which the Reformer was involved, and we cannot say, with the scanty information we have, that he had done anything to

draw it upon himself. But from this time to the end of his life, he never was exempt from some such embroilments.

Side by side with this contention, touching the Mastership of Canterbury Hall, there came a larger controversy, in which the King and the Parliament—in fact, the whole nation—was involved, and which scarcely ended during Wycliffe's life.

It was in A.D. 1366 or 1367 that Wycliffe was dismissed from the Wardenship of Canterbury College, and felt himself compelled to appeal to the Pope. Not long before, in A.D. 1365, that Pope, Urban V., had revived the claim of 1,000 marks per annum, first acknowledged by King John in A.D. 1213—demanding also arrears for the last thirty-three years, in which years, it was alleged, this shameful tribute had been forgotten to be paid. In the next year, A.D. 1366, the king laid this audacious demand before his Parliament, and it became a matter of senatorial discussion. After a lengthened debate, the Lords and Commons came to an unanimous conclusion that—

“Forasmuch as neither King John, or any other king, could bring this realm and kingdom into such thraldom and subjection, but by common consent of Parliament; the which was not done—therefore, that which he did was against his oath at his coronation. If, therefore, the Pope should

attempt anything against the king by process, or other matters in deed, the king, with all his subjects, should, with all their force and power, resist the same."

We soon perceive, not by any extant statements, but by facts, that Wycliffe had been concerned in these parliamentary proceedings. A tract written by him has been preserved, and in its pages we soon discover that it is a reply to an attack just made upon him by some monk, who, wishing to assail and to confute the resolves adopted in Parliament, does so by dealing with Wycliffe as in some sort their author. To answer this assault, the Reformer sends forth this tract or pamphlet, which, by internal evidence, we perceive to have been written in A.D. 1366 or 1367. This tract has been preserved by Mr. Lewis, in his "History of Wycliffe;" and is entitled "Determinatio quædam Magistri Johannis Wycliff, de Dominio; contra unum Monachum."

In this publication Wycliffe is careful to explain that he writes, not voluntarily, but in answer to a challenge addressed to him by name. He expresses his astonishment at the "passionate heat" with which he had been assailed; and he also explains the necessity under which he felt himself to reply: inasmuch as he being clerk and chaplain to the

king,* might be charged with negligence if he left such accusations unanswered.

One portion of this tract has given rise to much needless discussion. In replying to some of his opponent's demands, he says that, instead of offering opinions of his own, he shall refer the querist to some solutions of these questions, which he had heard given "in a certain assembly of secular lords," and he then proceeds to detail the sentiments expressed by some of these illustrious counsellors.†

These words have given rise to doubts—"What was Wycliffe, then, that he could repeat the speeches which he had heard at the mouths of lords in Parliament? Was he himself a member of that assembly? If not, how came he to be able to write down and publish the arguments used by its leaders?"

Such inquiries are quite unnecessary. Since Parliaments came into use in England there has scarcely ever been a time when a well-known man, attached to the king's household, might not obtain admission "to hear the debates." Nor would blame be cast upon him if he published some of the arguments he then heard, provided he omitted the names of the speakers. It is needless, then,

* *Peculiaris Regis clericus*, Le Bas, p. 129.

† Le Bas, p. 125.

to press the inquiry—How came Wycliffe to be able to cite these speeches—in what capacity was he present?

He is now, however, evidently becoming “a public man”—a man honoured and trusted. In A.D. 1361 an Oxford College had asked him to take its Presidency. Three or four years after, an Archbishop had selected him for the mastership of a hall he is founding. And now, we perceive, without any boasting on his part, that his name is known in the metropolis, and in the king's household. A serious controversy is opening between the Papacy and the British Crown and Parliament, and a partisan of the Romish See publicly assails Wycliffe as a leader in the debates; addressing him with “passionate heat” as if he had been a main instigator of the quarrel. This is, in truth, the opening of an earnest controversy, which is destined to last during the whole remainder of his life, and scarcely to subside when those troublous years terminate, and when that life, in A.D. 1384, ends also.

It is now evident, too, in A.D. 1366 or 1367, that Wycliffe, apparently without any desire or purpose on his part, begins that which was to be a main feature of his life, his authorship, the public use of his pen. He is forced, unwillingly, to write, partly in self-defence, a tract or pamphlet. It is,

we must suppose, the first of the kind, but it is the first of a long series of arguments on questions of the day. He felt earnestly a sympathy with his countrymen in the quarrel which the Pope had forced upon them. He knew the history of the Papacy ; its beginning in A.D. 607 ; its great central doctrine or fiction, Transubstantiation, not adopted as a doctrine of the Church till A.D. 1215. He had the necessary acquaintance with the defects and faults of the Church of Rome ; and, when compelled to do so, he was always ready to tell the Papacy and its advocates what he knew to be the truth, both of its shortcomings and also of its misdoings.

In or about this period, then, A.D. 1366-1367, Wycliffe was forced to take up his pen, and it was not till his death, eighteen years after, that he was permitted to lay it down. He was evidently one of the ablest writers of his time ; he had now been drawn into the Papal controversy, and we can have no doubt that he found authorship an interesting employment. The general result was the production of a vast number of works, generally intended for the public eye. Bishop Bale, in A.D. 1563, made a catalogue of 242 such writings known to him. Mr. Lewis, in A.D. 1720, extends the list to 280. The greater part obviously must have been of small size, but several of them are

of greater magnitude. One of his later biographers thus classifies them :—

Philosophical Works	.	.	.	11
Theological	.	.	.	17
Old and New Testament Cantica	.			12
Catechetical	.	.	.	18
Polemical, and Church Reform	.			75
Personal Explanations	.	.	.	10

Expositions of Scripture—Latin and English
—Very many.

Sermons—Latin and English—a great
number.

The *Summa in Theologia* comprises fifteen
books.

The Latin Works include ten or twelve equal
to the *Trialogus* in bulk, each of which
would fill a volume.

These works were highly valued at the time ; in Bohemia they gave rise to the Huss and Jerome martyrdoms ; in England they caused the Lollard persecutions, continued for almost a century. And now, in our own day, five centuries after Wycliffe's death, the Bodleian Library, the Lambeth Palace Library, the British Museum, Trinity College, Dublin, the Vienna Library, and many other collections, preserve, as treasured reliques,

manuscripts of the Reformer, or transcripts by his friends.

But it is time we returned to Wycliffe's final exclusion from Canterbury Hall, and the events which immediately followed it.

Simon Langham, the Archbishop who had expelled Wycliffe and his coadjutors from Canterbury Hall, was now a Cardinal. He procured the needed adjudication from the Papal Chamber in A.D. 1370, so that the Wardenship-question ended that year.

About the same time the patience of the nation, severely burdened by the French war, was also tried by the priestly pretensions to an exemption from these demands. In the Parliament of A.D. 1371, when the king applied for a fresh subsidy, the representatives of the Church claimed to be excepted from the necessary levy. This was no trifling question, since at that time, out of 53,215 *feoda militum* in England, the religious bodies possessed 28,000.* Long discussions arose, one result of which was, that the taxes laid upon the clergy were made more than usually heavy; and another vote which followed seemed to manifest a revengeful feeling. The king was intreated to fill for the future the high offices in the State by laymen rather than by priests and prelates. He

* Turner's Hist. England, vol. ii. p. 413.

complied with this desire, and very soon the Chancellorship and the Treasurership and several other offices were given to competent laymen.

The Pope began at this period to feel the want of the usual supplies from England, and in February, 1372, a Nuncio and Receiver, Arnold Garnier, presented himself in London, bearing written credentials from Gregory XI. He travelled with a train of servants and horses. He engaged offices in London, and at once applied himself to his work, which was to collect money—not by borrowing, but by demanding it. He remained in England upwards of two years, and carried back with him a very considerable sum as tribute collected in this realm.

It cannot be supposed that Wycliffe viewed this proceeding with any satisfaction. He wrote, in one of the following years, a tract, or pamphlet, "on the sworn obligations of the Papal Receiver," in which he discussed the question—whether Garnier was not guilty of perjury, inasmuch as he had taken an oath never to violate the rights and interests of the country, and yet collected a large amount of gold, and carried it out of the kingdom. In this tract, as in the previous one, "De Dominio," we find a denial of the theory, "that everything which the Pope thinks fit to do, *must be right*; must have the force of law, simply

because he does it." Here, too, in this same publication, we meet with the great Protestant principle, that "Holy Scripture is, for Christians, the rule and standard of truth." Garnier's proceedings and his collections are condemned as being "contrary to the Gospel."

In A.D. 1373 the Parliament again complained of the continual infringements of the rights of patrons by what were called "Papal provisions." The king replied, that he had already given instructions to his commissioners, who had visited Avignon, to complain of these and other encroachments, to which complaints his representatives had as yet received no distinct or definite answer. The Pope had postponed the matter for "further consultation."

Accordingly, in the next year, A.D. 1374, an Embassy was appointed to visit Bruges for the settlement of the terms of a peace between England and France. At the head of this Embassy stood John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and with him the Bishop of London, and others. But, as certain Papal Nuncios would also be at Bruges, it was determined to send a second party of Royal Commissioners to treat separately with the representatives of the Pope. This second Commission, on Church matters only, consisted of the Bishop of Bangor; John Wycliffe, "Doctor of Theology,"

and five others. It was dated July 26th, 1374; and as soon as it had been signed, Wycliffe departed for Flanders. He remained there nearly two months, and then returned to England, conscious, we cannot doubt, that nothing of any real value had been achieved. The Pope, or his nuncios, had made apparent concessions on insignificant points; but these were confined to matters of detail, and left all general principles untouched.

The truth was that, more than half a century before, in the days of Boniface VIII., the Papacy had made and published its final and matured claim and manifesto, and had not the slightest intention of departing from it. In the famous Bull *Unam Sanctam*, Boniface had declared that "All the faithful of Christ, by necessity of salvation, are subject to the Roman Pontiff, who hath both swords, and judges all men, but is judged by no one." The general conclusion of that Bull was, "Wherefore we declare and pronounce that it is absolutely essential to the salvation of every human being that he be subject unto the Roman Pontiff."

And in conformity with these pretensions, as Innocent III. had excommunicated King John, and released his subjects from all allegiance to him, so, in A.D. 1300, did this Pope Boniface VIII.

declare Scotland to be his own, ordering Edward I. to withdraw his armies from it.

These enormous pretensions had never been abandoned, or even moderated. The nuncios who received Wycliffe and his colleagues were quite willing to consider "cases of hardship," but to repeal or modify the Bull *Unam Sanctam* was quite beyond their powers, and quite beyond their intentions. The negotiations, therefore, produced little or no results.

Wycliffe, however, would gain by this attempt a clearer understanding of what the Papacy really was ; and he must have felt also the uselessness of trying to reconcile it with the true well-being and advancement of England. And his antagonists, also, would begin to appreciate *him*. They would see, in fact, that he was a man to be feared, a man to be disabled, if possible, from doing any further mischief. Only ten years of life now remained to Wycliffe, but they were years of conflict, years of bitter strife. Very soon we hear of Bulls calling for the trial and imprisonment of the Reformer ; but he, on his part, had no other weapons than spiritual ones, and those weapons he used with wondrous skilfulness and power.

We take up, then, the year A.D. 1374-5, the fiftieth year of Wycliffe's life, the year in which he was commencing the last ten years of his earthly exist-

ence—years the like of which was never seen in England's past or future history. He had returned to England, and we may feel quite assured of what would immediately follow. He would wait upon the king and his ministers, and would report to them the proceedings at Bruges, and the impossibility of bringing the Papal nuncios to any conclusions of real value. But now he would be surrounded by what may be called “the Protestant party” in Parliament, and would hold with them many a discussion on the duties which lay before them. No public movement could immediately take place, for the Pope was yet to send over his formal decision, and that decision did not arrive until September in A.D. 1375 ; and when examined, it proved to be of little real value. The concessions made were of no importance, for they all related to matters belonging to the past. For the future, the Pope remitted nothing of his claims—not even the smallest trifle.

Such a result as this could satisfy no one, except, indeed, those who were already more Roman than English. During the winter of 1375 the document itself was discussed, and in April, 1376, Parliament re-assembled. In those discussions Wycliffe must often have been present. That he should be consulted was natural, was inevitable ;

but we find no trace of his having gone beyond his proper path.

The Parliament of A.D. 1376, known long afterwards by the name of "The Good Parliament," addressed itself immediately to the subject. In an indignant memorial, or remonstrance, it complained to the king—

"That the taxes paid to the Pope for ecclesiastical appointments amounted to five times as much, year by year, as all the taxes which are paid to the king."*

"That the negociators (or brokers) of Avignon promoted, for money, creatures destitute of learning or of character, to livings of a thousand marks annual income."

"That these aliens, who never saw or cared to see their parishioners, have these livings, bringing God's service into contempt, and conveying away the treasure of the realm."

"That the Pope's collector and other strangers are keeping a house in London, with clerks and officers; transporting, yearly, to the Pope twenty thousand marks and more."

* One instance of this had just been seen. In A.D. 1374, on the death of Archbishop Whittlesey, the Pope nominated Bishop Sudbury of London to be his successor; Bishop Courtenay of Hereford to be Bishop of London; and John Gilbert to be Bishop of Hereford. Each of these paid one year's income, as first-fruits to the Pope.

“That cardinals and other aliens, residing with the Papal Court, have, among them, a deanery of York, a deanery of Lincoln, a deanery of Salisbury, with Archdeaconries of Canterbury, of Durham, of Suffolk, and of York; and divers of the best dignities in England.”

They, the Parliament, then went on to ask for the speedy application of effectual remedies, by prohibition, expulsion, and the like.

The royal reply was of a hesitating character —“the king had done, and would continue to do, all that was in his power.” Edward III. was now growing old and infirm. But the Parliament of A.D. 1377 repeated the entreaties of 1376. In all this, Dr. Lechler reasonably observes:—“We see strong evidence of the influence of Wycliffe.” Naturally enough, the agents and partisans of the Papacy thought so also; and we hear, just about this time, that Rome begins to move, and to call upon her friends to bestir themselves for “the suppression of this dangerous heresy.”

Doubtless, they had received warning two years before the period upon which we have entered. The Pope’s representatives at Bruges, in 1374, would quickly perceive, in those discussions, the ground taken by Wycliffe—ground quite irreconcileable with the great Bull *Unam Sanctam* of Pope Boniface the VIIIth.

The years A.D. 1375-6 must have been anxious years for the leaders of the Romish party in England. If they looked to the Papal Court for instructions, they would receive little but injunctions "to bring that man Wycliffe to justice." "Command him to appear before you, send him to prison." And then the prelates, Courtenay foremost, and with him several other bishops, associated themselves for the extirpation of this new heresy. But they soon saw the expediency of having the Pope's own authority for what they had resolved to do. They sent this, their conviction, to the Papal Court, and, accordingly, in May 1377, a series of bulls came forth, directed by Gregory XI. from Rome, whither he had recently returned, to the King, to the Archbishop, to the Bishop of London, and to the University of Oxford.

Courtenay was then Bishop of London, and he doubtless was well informed of the character of these bulls, all of which had the same purport. The persons to whom they were sent were informed that the Pope had heard that John Wycliffe, rector of Lutterworth, "had dared to assert and spread abroad opinions utterly subversive of the Church." Wherefore they—the king, the archbishop and bishop, and the University of Oxford—"were enjoined to seize the person of the

said Wickliffe, and to imprison him until they had received further instructions." Courtenay, however, being forewarned, had already commenced operations. He had cited Wycliffe to appear at St. Paul's Cathedral on the 19th of February, 1377, there to answer for himself. No doubt can exist, that if the bishop could then have proceeded as he desired and intended, John Wycliffe would have been consigned, at the close of that day's proceedings, to some convenient prison, from which he would only have come forth "when the Pope should be pleased to give directions."

Wycliffe attended, but with him came the king's son, John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster, and Lord Henry Percy. A contention soon arose between these great men and the prelates, and in the end the purposes of Courtenay were, for the present, frustrated. The alleged criminal and his powerful friends withdrew together.

Naturally enough, in March 1378 the bishop made a second attempt. Wycliffe was now summoned, not to St. Paul's, but to the Archbishop's chapel at Lambeth. He again attended, but the whole proceeding was a second time foiled, though in a different manner.

A monk of St. Alban's* tells us, of this time, that "many great lords had embraced Wickliffe's

* *Chronicon Angliae*, p. 116.

mad doctrines," and that "he drew after him many citizens of London into the bottomless pit of error. He ran from church to church and scattered his mad lies in the ears of very many."

It is not, therefore, at all wonderful to hear, that a great crowd of the citizens of London forced their way into the chapel at Lambeth, and used threats and menaces. The bishops were alarmed, and heard, probably without much regret, a messenger from the Princess of Wales, Sir Henry Clifford, who brought her counsel, or command, to suspend all proceedings. A second time, therefore, Wycliffe withdrew, untouched, from the Papal tribunal.

As to Oxford, the Papal bull was received with manifest coldness and reluctance. A debate took place, to Walsingham the Romish chronicler's disgust,* whether it should be received or rejected, and no inclination was shown to comply with the Pope's injunctions. Nothing could evince, more clearly than this reluctance, the astonishing hold that Wycliffe had obtained on the mind and inclinations of the University.

Of this wonderful fact a singular proof is given us in Anthony Wood's "Annals of Oxford," when he comes to speak of this time, A.D. 1377. He is no favourer of Wycliffe, but he evidently desired

* Le Bas, p. 174.

to give an impartial account of the great struggle then going on in the University. He tells us that—

“Those of the University” (he evidently means, men of position in the University) “who held with Wycliffe were—

1. Uthred Bolton, a monk of Durham.
2. John Aston, of Merton College.
3. Nicholas Hereford, Prof. Divinity, Queen's College.
4. Philip Repingdon, Doctor of Divinity, Canon of Leicester.
5. Laurence Redeman, M.A.
6. David Gotray, Doctor of Divinity.
7. John Aschwardby, Vicar of St. Mary's Church.
8. Rob. Rugge, Prof. of Divinity, Master of Merton College.
9. 10. John Huntman and Walter Dash, Proctors of the University.
11. Henry Crump, monk.
12. William James, Merton College, Regent in Arts.
13. Thomas Brightwell, Merton College, Prof. of Divinity.
14. John Purvey, M.A., a great Expositor.

A little further on, in A.D. 1382, Wycliffe having now retired to his Leicestershire parsonage, Wood merely observes that

“As for the followers of Wycliffe, they much increased ; speaking and acting what they pleased, without much contradiction” (p. 502). He speaks, it should be remembered, of Oxford, and of it only.*

Two years later Wood briefly records his death, as having occurred in Lutterworth ; and, while mentioning the enmity and opposition which he had experienced, allows, on the other hand, that, “As for his learning, even his enemies do infinitely extol him, especially Brother Wydeford, Henry Knyghton, an historian of his own time, and Walden, who commends him as one whose learning was extolled even in Paris and Bologna.” This Walden, writing to one of the Popes, said that “he had been wonderfully astonished at the strength of his arguments, with the authorities he had gathered, and with the vehemency and strength of his reasonings.”

* Three centuries and a half after 1377, two very remarkable men—George Whitefield and John Wesley—dwelt in Oxford for several years ; and fifty years later, Charles Simeon dwelt in Cambridge. It would scarcely be just to institute any comparison, but the vast difference between the influence of Wycliffe, in his day, and of the other three in their times, can hardly be passed over in silence. Evidently, he had the lead ; he almost ruled in the Oxford in which he lived : their influence, in the Oxford and Cambridge in which they lived, was, in comparison, as next to nothing.

IV.

RETIREMENT TO LUTTERWORTH.

THE Year A.D. 1378 is noticed by most of his biographers as "forming a turning-point in Wycliffe's career." The attacks made upon him by the Prelates, in obedience to the Pope's command, had failed. At St. Paul's, and at Lambeth, he had appeared at their call, but no result had followed. Doubtless the Bishops who had summoned him had expected and intended that, unless he had submitted and craved for mercy, they should be enabled to comply with the Papal injunctions, "to cause John Wycliffe to be put in prison, and to be kept there till they should receive further instructions from the Pope." But this their expectation was disappointed once and again. They then turned to Oxford, where they hoped to find greater liberty and greater power. Delay was caused by the death of the Pope, by the Papal schism, and then by the death of the Archbishop. Hence it was not until November in 1382 that seven Bishops assembled in Synod

at Oxford and called Wycliffe before them. But this proceeding, like the former two, resulted in nothing more important than a censure. But it mattered little ; Wycliffe's course had been taken two or three years before. While residing at Oxford, in the beginning of A.D. 1379, he was seized with a dangerous sickness. In all probability, he had already considered and decided, so far as he could decide such a question, his future course ; but this illness would give him time for many hours of reflection, and he would feel, with increasing certainty, that, at his time of life, and with failing health, a retirement from Oxford, and from London, and from all personal strife, was the obvious course pointed out by ordinary prudence.

But we shrink from regarding the case in this point of view. Wycliffe was not going into "retirement," in the ordinary meaning of the word. He was about to take up a series of labours, surpassing all that he had encountered during the past twenty years. He was about to commence, in reality and truth, the Great Reformation of Modern Europe. Was this a mere earthly-minded or vain-glorious scheme—knowing, as he did, that his remaining days upon earth would be very few ?

Taking the largest view, and asking, "What

personal end could Wycliffe have had in his mind in the ceaseless toilings of these closing years?" and asking, also, "What is the lesson we gather from the results?" are we not driven to the teachings of St. Luke, or rather of St. Luke's Divine Instructor, in such words as these—

"Then hath God unto the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."—Acts xi. 18.

"Gamaliel said, 'If this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought ; but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it.'"—Acts v. 39.

"Now when they had gone throughout Phrygia and Galatia, and were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, they essayed to go into Bithynia ; but the Spirit suffered them not. Then a vision appeared unto Paul in the night ; there stood a man of Macedonia and prayed him, saying, 'Come over into Macedonia and help us.' Then immediately we endeavoured to go into Macedonia, assuredly gathering that the Lord had called us to preach the gospel unto them."—Acts xvi. 6, 10.

"Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, 'Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace. For I am with thee, and no man shall hurt thee ; for I have much people in this city.'"—Acts xviii. 9, 10.

Can we doubt that the same Lord who cared

for and ruled over His Church in the days of Luke and of Paul, cared for it in like manner in the days of Wycliffe and of Cobham, of Jerome and of Huss, of Luther and of Latimer? And now, in these five or six years, A.D. 1379-1384, He was about to do for that Church, by this His servant, a great work, and to confer on it a great gift.

But let us proceed to attempt a rapid, because of necessity a brief, description of Wycliffe's last attempts and purposes.

In A.D. 1380-1382 we can see that two distinct and separate works were going on—the translation of the Bible from the Latin, a dead language, into "the language understood of the people :" And, next, the gathering together, training, and sending forth a body of preachers, or home-missionaries, resembling those sent out by the Church's Lord, and described in Luke x. Which of these two works was first taken in hand by Wycliffe and his friends we are not informed. It seems probable that even those engaged in them would have found it difficult to answer this question. To provide Bibles in the language of the people would appear to be the first, the greatest of all duties. But this work could not be performed in one year, or in two, or in three. The "poor preachers," meanwhile, could not wait—could not stand still. Yet, when they began to declare "the

gospel of the grace of God," how soon would the question be asked, "Where can we read *that*?"

On the whole, we incline to give the first place to the Translation. Doubtless both of these great purposes were suggested to the minds of the Reformer and his friends, some years before the practical results could be seen or heard of. Wycliffe, tired of Synods and citations, would frequently ask himself, "Of what use is all this wrangling and contention? Let us find some quiet corner, where we may try to do some real good—to produce something that will *endure*." Hence the retirement to Lutterworth, the only preferment which he appears to have permanently accepted, and a suitable place for such a work;—the earnest and continuous labour given to the production of an English Bible. *Here*, at least, Wycliffe knew that he could not be wrong—could not possibly be mistaken. In whichever of the Gospels he looked, to find his Master's own teaching, he was sure to find such words as these—

"Have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God?" "Do ye not err, because ye know not the Scriptures?" "All things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me." "Search the Scriptures; they are they which testify of me." "The word that I have

spoken, the same shall judge him at the Last Day."

A recent writer has sagaciously said—

"Two mighty agencies suggested themselves to his service—the translation of the Bible into the vernacular; and the 'Poor Priests' who were to make it known. We are not to understand that either of these started as a full-blown project in a particular year; but it is noticeable that we do not hear of either till this date, A.D. 1378; while we find the first draft of the translation of the Bible, finished, and the 'Poor Priests' in full operation, in A.D. 1381."*

Into the interior of Wycliffe's studio, or laboratory, we need not desire to pry. No operator of any experience would have undertaken so great a task without competent assistants. In this case we meet with the names of Nicholas Hereford and John Purvey, and sometimes of John Aston, as among his principal auxiliaries. There can be little doubt that the first two gladly undertook and carried through the greater part of the work. We shall presently see that Wycliffe's mind and his pen were, in all these months, busily engaged in other and not unimportant work. All that we can assume—and *must* assume—is this, that his thoughts (and his eye also) were scarcely ever

* Prof. Montagu Burrows, p. 89.

withdrawn, and that when this or that book was finally handed to the transcribers, they were truthfully given as parts of "Wycliffe's Bible;" as parts of a book which no one ever doubted to be truly his own; some of them having been work of his own, and other parts having been first written by his trusted friends, and then, page by page and line by line, examined by him, and finally approved.

Like all other translations of any estimation, "Wycliffe's Bible" was, for years, during the latter part of his life, and after that life was ended, passing through frequent revisions. This was both right and also inevitable. Signs and proofs of it are found, in the one hundred and seventy manuscript copies which still exist, in various libraries in England and elsewhere.* Their existence, indeed, after five hundred years have passed, is a marvellous fact—a fact, we suppose, wholly unique, wholly unequalled in the whole history of literature. Nothing at all resembling it ever came within our notice. For, it must be remembered, these hundred and seventy copies are the survivors of a far larger number, hunted for in vain through the one or two centuries after Wycliffe's death, by the men who had dragged his bones out of their grave, in order to burn them!

The second great work to which Wycliff devoted himself, in the five or six years we are now considering, was that of creating, organizing, and sending forth of a band or society of Poor Preachers, to take up the work to which the Lord Jesus had called his "Seventy," described in Luke x. There could scarcely be a closer imitation, or rather a more exact following, than we find here. It was because "the harvest truly was great, but the labourers were few," that "the Lord appointed other Seventy also." These were told to carry neither "purse, nor scrip, nor shoes;" they were to subsist on "such things as they give;" they were to preach "the kingdom of God." How Wycliffe could hope to follow in his Lord's footsteps in this matter would have been a matter of doubt to us, had not that doubt been ended when we read Anthony Wood's list of Oxford men "who held with Wycliffe." When we found there the names of fourteen men, all *men of position* in the University, who were friends and adherents of the Reformer, our first thought was, "Why, here is a 'Church Pastoral Aid Committee,' all ready to his hands."

As a matter of fact we know that such a Committee was formed, and that "the Seventy" were sent forth. We know this, not by any Wycliffite boastings, but by the angry complaints of those who hated Wycliffe. Archbishop Courtenay made

it a chief accusation that the Reformer had broached “certain heretical and erroneous doctrines tending to overthrow the whole Church ;” and which, he says, “are preached in divers places in our province, generally and publicly.” He told the House of Lords that these preachings were carried on, “not only in churches and church-yards, but even in market-places and public thoroughfares, to the great spiritual peril of the people.”

And, even more, the Pope himself, Gregory XI., on sending his Bulls against Wycliffe into England, “laments that England, which had been illustrious for the purity of its faith, should now be *overrun* with the tares of a pestilent heresy.”*

Mr. Matthew tells us, in his preface to the “English Works of Wycliffe,” that—

“His aim in instituting ‘the Poor Priests’ was to supply the defects of the existing parsons, who, too often, after collecting their tithes and dues, held the ‘saying of services’ to be their only duty, and left their flocks without preaching or spiritual instruction.”†

That these “Poor Preachers” were soon known and heard in the country round Oxford, and round Lutterworth, is manifest. Dr. Vaughan quotes a Proclamation which came forth, warning the people

* Le Bas’s Life of Wycliffe, p. 172.

† Preface, p. xvi.

"against divers evil persons who pretend great lowliness, and who *preach daily*, not in churches only, but in markets, fairs, and other open places, to the destruction of the laws of Holy Church." Knyghton mentions a number of persons of station who favoured Wycliffe, and who, when one of his Poor Preachers came into their neighbourhood, would send round and speedily assemble a great audience.* This same Romish chronicler even complains that "if you met two persons in the street, one of them was sure to be a Wycliffite." †

A third great feature of the case is even more remarkable than the former two. It is this:—Not only was Wycliffe at this time earnestly engaged in the translation of the Bible; not only was he busily employed in the superintendence of his Poor Priests, but he was also, and even after an attack of paralysis, as busily or rather more busily employed with his pen than at any former period of his life! So agree all his editors, all his biographers.

Thus, Vaughan wrote, more than twenty years ago:—

"Wycliffe is silenced in Oxford; he retires to Lutterworth; but not to be inactive. One result

* Vaughan, p. 278.

† Shirley, Fasc, p. 360.

we see in the almost incredible number of Tracts and Treatises issued by him during the next three years.” *

Mr. Matthew, more recently says :—

“ His doctrines had been condemned, his friends were scattered and silenced, and he himself was worn with age, and palsied ; yet in the prosecution of his work neither courage nor energy failed him, and his literary activity during this last period of his life would have been wonderful in a man of full strength. Tracts, Latin and English, came in quick succession from his pen ; and, as if these were not enough to occupy him, he gave in the *Trialogus* a complete and orderly summary of his doctrine, starting with the highest topics, and coming down to details of Church government.” †

Professor Montagu Burrows, touching upon the same point, observes that—

“ It was during this period that most of his most important writings, attacking the corruptions of Romanism, were composed and sent forth.” And he adds, “ The thought which most naturally arises is, How was all this *possible*, within the limits of human power.”

He suggests that “ The explanation is mainly to be found in the intense energy, extraordinary power, and resolute will of the man, who felt that

* Vaughan, p. 349. † Matthew, Preface, p. 31.

he was drawing near the end of his life, and yet was not too old to apply with effect the lessons of experience which he had acquired during the course of it."

Here, then, was a third kind of occupation—a third department of labour in which Wycliffe might and did employ himself in the last few years of his life ; when, in his parsonage at Lutterworth, he prepared himself for that summons to depart, which he knew might be soon expected.

But when, or whether *ever*, such another parsonage as Lutterworth presented any similar view, as that of the translation of the English Bible, the management of "the Seventy" poor priests, and also the giving forth of several volumes of theology, and several hundreds of popular sermons—all during one and the same series of months—is a question which may be left to each reader's reflection.

V.

THE CLOSE.

BUT, at last, in the latest days of A.D. 1384, it seemed good to the Master to call his servant to his rest.

In the closing days of that December, while standing where he often stood, on the floor of his church, preparing for the usual commemoration of the Great Sacrifice, John Wycliffe fell to the earth. The message had been sent, from his Master's throne in heaven, "Come up hither!" He obeyed—if still conscious, he obeyed gladly. He was carried home, and in the last hours of the departing year the words flew far and near, "John Wycliffe is dead!" A more impressive, a more startling word, if truly understood, never was heard in England.

The last days and weeks of that remarkable life had been given, we know, to a favourite occupation—to the frequent, if not incessant revisal and reconsideration of that portion of the Bible

which he had taken for his own—for his own section of the English Bible. In the closing years of this great work, which were also the closing years of the translator's life, it could not be, but that in every leisure hour he should have in his hands, and should ponder, with continually-increasing interest, the latest works of the chiefest of all the Apostles. Paul was standing, in A.D. 66, in no uncertain position. He knew the truth of what he was writing when he said to "Timothy, mine own son in the faith : "

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day. And not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."—2 Tim. iv. 6-9.

We say again, and we say it without a shadow of doubt, that Wycliffe, in the last two years of his life (A.D. 1383-4) must have had these words of St. Paul often in his hands; and that it was impossible that he should read them without the thought often occurring,—"How far do these solemn words belong to me—how far may I read them with self-application?" Not long before the period of which we are speaking he had suffered

an attack (perhaps a second attack) of paralysis* and had written, of a Papal summons to Rome—

“Thus says a certain lame and infirm man, cited to this Court, that the royal command prevents him from going to Rome; that the King of kings plainly decrees that he should not go.”

Wycliffe, then, in A.D. 1382-3 was doing his daily work—was preaching, writing, visiting, revising—and during all these months the words of St. Paul must have been constantly in his thoughts, “I am now ready to be offered; and the time of my departure is at hand.”

How far he could adopt the words which follow: “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me in that day,” we will not venture to say. But the closing words of the Apostle would be consoling, would be comforting: “And not to me (Paul) only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Several of his later writings shew how entirely Wycliffe had accepted this later description.

“What is turning to God? Nothing but turning from the world, from sin, and from the fiend. . . . To be turned from the world is to set at nought its joys, and to suffer meekly all bitterness, slanders and deceit for the love of Christ. . . .

* He had been seriously ill at Oxford in 1379.

“O good Jesus! enter into the inmost recesses of my soul ; come into mine heart and fill it with Thy sweetness. Only Thy presence is to me solace or comfort :—only Thy absence leaves me sorrowful.”

“O Holy Ghost, who inspirlest where Thou wilt, come unto me ; draw me to Thyself, that I may despise and set at nought all the things of this world !”

The question which we have but faintly indicated remains, and we shall not attempt any kind of answer. It is of this kind :—

St. Paul wrote the thoughts which came into his mind, and we read them without a doubt. He spoke the truth, for he was inspired by the Spirit of the living God. John Wycliffe was the first to put the words of Paul into the English language. When he himself read them again and again in the closing days of his life, might he not justly and lawfully make them his own ?

Between Paul’s utterance in A.D. 66, and Wycliffe’s adoption of the words in A.D. 1384, do we discern any other human being in the whole history of the Church, who can be indicated as taking an equal place with these two ?

Since his illness in A.D. 1379, he had experienced a paralytic attack in 1382, probably the second of the kind ; and it had left him, as he says,

“lame and infirm.” Yet, what were his employments two years before this illness and two years after it?

“First and foremost of all things—(he might reply)—the Bible, the chapter of the Gospels, or Epistles, which I was yesterday re-examining. Then before noon there will be two of my poor priests calling upon me for instructions. Where to direct their steps? what friends they will find in this or that village, and how ‘daily bread’ shall be provided. Two or three short sermons are ready for them; and I have found an old garment which will be very acceptable to the younger of the two. At twelve I must be at the Church; and in the afternoon I must examine a copy of the *Trialogus*, upon which James has been many weeks at work, and which he is just finishing. If I can find time I must look at that work which they sent me from Oxford last week; and, besides, I have two calls to make upon poor sick women.”

In a word, Wycliffe, in these last weeks and months of his life, was still the Rector of Lutterworth; still a parish priest; still discharging his parochial duty; so that when at last the messenger was sent to call him to “Come up higher,” it was upon the floor of his church that the summoned one was found. But he was also the translator, he was also the director of “the poor priests,”

he was also during the same period pouring forth most of his important writings, so that “the thought naturally arises, How was all this possible?”

Professor Burrows, as we have just seen, finds the explanation in “The intense energy, the extraordinary power and the resolute will of the man, who *felt that he was drawing near the end of his life*; and yet was not too old to apply with effect the lessons of experience which he had acquired in the course of it.”

This is true: and thus must we take our leave of the man who, looking forward and remembering the words of Paul, “I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand,” is quietly content to go forward, day by day, waiting for the messenger, without alarm and without impatience.

To attempt, in taking leave of so remarkable a man, anything like a Portraiture is a task from which most men would shrink. We must content ourselves with offering a few imperfect sketches from the hands of men who, like ourselves, feel the subject to be too serious to be hastily touched.

“The spare, emaciated frame of Wycliffe,” says Mr. Green, “weakened by study and asceticism, hardly promised a Reformer who would carry on the stormy work of Ockham; but within this frail

form lay a temper quick and restless, an immense energy, an immoveable conviction. The personal charm which ever accompanies real greatness only deepened the influence he derived from the spotless purity of his life.”*

Bishop Short says: “In estimating the value of the labours of Wycliffe, we should not forget that he was distinguished in his own day as much for his learning and eloquence, as for his opposition to the Court of Rome; and that even his enemies confess that they could not help admiring the various talents he possessed. The effect of his preaching was so widely spread, that Knyghton (the Romish chronicler) affirms that above one-half of the people of England were Lollards, a declaration which must be received with limitations.”†

Dean Waddington adds, that “it was the misfortune of Wycliffe, as it was his greatest glory, that he anticipated by almost two centuries the principles of a more enlightened generation, and scattered his lessons on a soil not yet prepared to give them maturity.” “Therefore it was wisely determined by this admirable Christian to send forth along with them the sacred volume itself. This was the life of the system, the treasure which

* Green's History, p. 229.

† Bishop Short's Church Hist. p. 65.

he bequeathed to future ages for their immortal inheritance.”*

Dean Milman follows in the same strain, saying — “Wycliffe had, though the object of the bitterest hatred, even in his own day awed his most violent antagonists into something approaching to admiration. His exemplary life defied even calumny. His industry even in those laborious days was astonishing. The number of his books, mostly indeed tracts, baffles calculation.”†

One of his recent editors, Mr. Matthew, adds :— “One of Wycliffe’s most marked characteristics lies in his essential moderation. Even when his language is most vehement, the thought and purpose beneath it are sane and reasonable. When we go down to the kernel of thought we find no wildness. Whether the question in hand be one of doctrine or of discipline, Wycliffe has considered it carefully, both in principle and at its practical bearings. It is this characteristic which entitles him to his pre-eminence as the first of the Reformers. . . . In his conclusions he forestated in many points the judgments of the more moderate Reformers of the sixteenth century.”‡

* Dean Waddington’s Hist. of the Church, pp. 583-585.

† Dean Milman’s Latin Christianity, vol. viii. p. 199.

‡ Eng. Works of Wycliffe, ed. by Matthew, p. xli.

And Dean Hook, deemed a High Churchman, affirms that, "John Wycliffe may be justly accounted one of the greatest men that our country has produced. He is one of the very few who have left the impress of their minds, not only on their own age but on all time."*

Last of all we may quote one of the most recent of these estimates of Wycliffe, that of Dr. Buddensieg of Leipsic. He describes Wycliffe as—

"One of the greatest men England has ever produced ; a religious genius, whose vestiges are to be found, not only in the history of his own country, but in the spiritual history of mankind."

He adds that—

"The Reformation, whether in Germany or in England, was no sudden outburst ; but its origin must be traced back into the past, and from no one can it with greater truth be said to have emanated, than from John Wycliffe. In the spirit of this wonderful man, Protestantism arose. By the greatness of his soul, by the depth of his religious feeling, he had become the leader of his people."

* Hook's *Lives of Archbishops*, vol. iii. p. 76.

ENGLAND'S TRAINING.

III.

I.—THE RERORMATION ADVANCING.
II.—IN BOHEMIA, AND ELSEWHERE.
III.—UNDER THE TUDOR FAMILY—
 HENRY VIII., EDWARD VI., MARY,
 ELIZABETH.

I.

THE REFORMATION ADVANCING.

DR. BUDDENSIEG's clear-sightedness led him, in the passage we have just quoted, to detect and to put aside an inaccuracy, a misnomer, by which "Wycliffe's place in history" has long been obscured and brought into doubt. It has been for many years past the custom to describe the Reformer as "the Morning Star of the Reformation." But this is a mis-use of terms. A Morning Star is no part of the Day. It is not the dawning, nor the sunrise ; it is nothing but a harbinger, a precursor —something which tells us that the day is coming. But Wycliffe was much more than this. He was raised up ; he was sent, as Dr. Buddensieg says, to be *the beginner* of the Reformation. In his day, indeed, we see only the Dawn,—the Sunrising. The Noonday came, evidently and undeniably, more than a century after, when Luther and Melancthon, Zuinglius and Calvin, Cranmer and Ridley, all appeared, nearly side by side. But what they were, and what they taught, may all be seen

struggling forth out of the prevailing darkness, long before Luther's father had been born. In Wycliffe we see, A.D. 1360-1384, the Dawn of the Reformation, and no mere Morning Star.

That he was no solitary being, appearing and then passing away, will be seen in England's history for a century after. That which he had begun went on, struggling through persecutions, until, at the end of a hundred years, the Tudor family came in, and Henry and Elizabeth put an end to the struggle with the Papacy.

Wycliffe's death could not have been unexpected. Courtenay and Arundel, and the other partisans of the Papacy, had long had their eyes fixed upon him ; and, being aware of his illnesses in 1379 and 1382, they judged it to be wiser to wait a little longer, till he should be removed ; naturally expecting that when the leader should have been taken away, they should find it easy to scatter and subdue the Lollards and "poor priests," who had been apparently called into existence by him.

A sad and doleful century followed. Wycliffe was carried to his grave in the opening days of A.D. 1385, and the battle of Bosworth, fought at the close of A.D. 1484, saw the end of the ruling dynasty, and the house of Tudor quietly seated on the throne.

Meanwhile, however, the closing years of century fourteen, clouded by the bad government and strange mistakes of Richard II., gave to the Lollards and to their adversaries alike, nothing but perplexity and alarm. Among the people, the followers of Wycliffe, now generally called "Lollards," were very numerous. "They abounded," says Mr. Green, "everywhere, and in all classes; in the baronage, in the cities, among the peasantry—nay, even in the monastic cell itself." "Nobles, like the Earl of Salisbury and Lord Cobham, placed themselves at the head. London was fiercely Lollard."*

Dean Milman gives the same account, saying:—

"Wycliffe's opinions had sunk into the hearts of multitudes. They were found in all orders, ranks, and classes; in the baronial castle; in the city among the burghers; in the peasant's hut. London was their stronghold, but the midland towns, rising into opulence, were full of Wycliffism."†

A wonderful work, surely, to have been wrought, in a quarter of a century, by a youth from Yorkshire, who, in A.D. 1340–1349, had been studying at Bradwardine's side in Merton College. Its reality is seen in the fact that when he and all his

* Green's History, pp. 235, 252.

† Milman, pp. 204, 206.

personal friends and adherents had been carried to their graves, it took almost one entire century to extirpate "Lollardism." Nor was this extirpation, after all, really effected. For, although, at the beginning of the Tudor dynasty, in the days of Henry VII., Lollardism was silent, and appeared to be gone,—in the days of Henry VII.'s. grandson, Cranmer was Archbishop of Canterbury, and Ridley Bishop of London—men who would have regarded Wycliffe as a heaven-sent teacher.

However, let us return to the sixteen years which remained of the fourteenth century, before, with the opening of the fifteenth, poor King Richard II. was dethroned, and Henry IV., his cousin, son of John of Gaunt, ascended the throne. These years were full of disputes and contentions, having no definite result.

At last the prelates reached an apparent success. The "circumstances under which Henry IV. came to the throne rendered it necessary for him to strengthen his interests with every sort of ally, and there was no method by which the support of the Church could be gained so easily, as by assisting the bishops in their severities against the Lollards."*

"The Parliament, which assembled in Westminster Hall, received with shouts of applause a

* Bishop Short's History, p. 67.

paper in which Richard resigned the Crown. The two archbishops, taking the new sovereign by the hand, seated him upon the throne, and Henry, in emphatic words, ratified the compact.”*

“ The support of the Church had been purchased by the promise of persecution. This pledge was speedily redeemed. In the first Convocation of his reign, Henry announced himself as the protector of the Church, and ordered the prelates to take measures for the suppression of heresy and of the wandering preachers. In the next year, by the ‘Statute of Heretics,’ the bishops were not only permitted to arrest and imprison all preachers of heresy, but a refusal to abjure enabled them to hand over the heretic to the civil officers; and by these he was to be burnt on a high place before the people.”†

This statute established a repressive government throughout England for almost a century to come. It had scarcely been passed before William Sawtree, a London clergyman, who had been one of Wycliffe’s followers, suffered martyrdom. “ He was brought to the stake by Archbishop Arundel. His offence was that he refused to worship the cross, and denied that the bread in the Sacrament was transubstantiated.”‡

* Green’s History, p. 257. † Ibid. p. 258.

‡ Bishop Short’s History, p. 67.

Bishop Short adds: "There is an almost uninterrupted succession of martyrs and confessors from this time to the period of the Reformation." These were of all ranks and denominations. "A layman, John Badbie, was burnt, in the presence of the Prince of Wales, for a denial of transubstantiation. Lord Cobham, who had himself been a friend of the Prince, was hung in chains, and a fire slowly kindled beneath his feet. Thirty-nine other Lollards were executed about the same time."*

This system could not wholly succeed, but it succeeded in part. It reduced Lollardism to silence—to secrecy. We have still in England one hundred and seventy copies of Wycliffe's Bible. It is probable that, in the Tudor reigns, there were more than three times as many. We have now hundreds of Wycliffe's own writings, small and large. In Tudor times there must have been thousands. But all this written truth, called Lollardism, lived on in silence.

England could not prosper under such a system. After a while it drifted into the quarrel between York and Lancaster, of which Mr. Green justly says:—

"There are few periods in our annals from which we turn with such weariness and disgust as from

* Green's History, p. 260.

the ‘Wars of the Roses.’ Its thick crowd of savage battles ; its ruthless executions ; its shameless treasons, seem all the more terrible from the pure selfishness of the ends for which men fought ; the utter want of all nobleness and chivalry in the struggle itself ; of all great result in its close.”*

One dreadful instance of the character of these “Wars of York and Lancaster” is seen in the “Battle of Towton.” In modern times one of the greatest of battles has been that of Waterloo, by which conflict the fate of the world was decided, and Europe gained a peace of fifty years. “The British and Hanoverians, under Wellington’s command, suffered a loss of 11,960 men in that great battle.”† But, in A.D. 1461, the Yorkists defeated the Lancasterians at Towton in Yorkshire, and the loss between the two English factions was 38,000 men.‡ The only result was, to give the Yorkists the throne *for twenty-three years!*

“The House of Lancaster” had wrongfully seized upon the throne at the opening of the century. It gave the prelates “the Statute of Heretics,” and in sixty years, with that statute in their hands, they had succeeded in silencing Lollardism. Punishment then came, and at

* Green’s History, p. 282.

† Macfarlane’s Hist. of England, vol. iv. p. 323.

‡ Ibid, vol. i. 622.

Towton the House of Lancaster was overthrown. The Yorkists now took the sovereignty, and kept it for some twenty years. Next came the Tudors, who, in fifty years, abolished the monasteries and printed the English Bible. But of their doings we must speak presently.

II.

IN BOHEMIA, AND ELSEWHERE.

TO describe, however briefly, the reigns of Henry VII. and Henry VIII., without frequent allusions to the princes and peoples of Continental Europe, would be nearly impossible. And to speak of Luther and Melancthon without any reference to John Huss and Jerome of Prague, would be equally inconsistent. A few words, therefore, must be uttered touching certain events, universally known, which are closely connected with Wycliffe's history.

The Queen of Richard II. was a Bohemian princess. She, as a member of a royal house, visited England with a train of attendants. In London, or Windsor, she mixed with royal and princely persons—John of Gaunt, and others ; and Wycliffe and his controversies would often be a subject of conversation. His publications would be shown to her, and if she wished, she might procure copies of them.

Years passed over, her husband died, and she

returned to her own country, and her own family. Either she herself, or some of her attendants, carried back with them Wycliffe's writings, or such of them as they had been able to obtain. In this way it came to pass that, years after, when the Bohemian prelates set themselves to destroy, if they could, Wycliffe's doctrines and Wycliffe's writings out of their land, Subinco, the Archbishop, making diligent search, succeeded in finding and seizing two hundred books or writings of Wycliffe's, many of which were richly bound, and he committed them all to the flames. No better proof could be given of the estimation in which the Reformer's works were held ; and that, in a country distant many hundreds of miles from Oxford and from Lutterworth.

Of the martyrdom of John Huss and Jerome of Prague we cannot stop to give any description in this place. It must suffice to say that these two eminent men were publicly burned to death ; a chief accusation brought against them being that they maintained the heresies of John Wycliffe. To complete the whole transaction, the Council (held at Constance) decreed that the bones of Wycliffe should be taken out of his Leicestershire grave, burned, and cast into the river. This decree, forty-three years after the Reformer's death, was actually carried into effect. "The brook," says

Fuller, "conveyed his ashes to the Avon ; Avon into Severn ; Severn into the narrow seas ; they into the main ocean. And thus the ashes of Wycliffe are the emblem of his doctrine, which is now dispersed all the world over !"

This, however, is nothing but a hasty retrospect of past days. The remains of Wycliffe had been publicly burned in A.D. 1428 ; but we have already spoken of the Battle of Towton, and of Henry VII.'s accession. His reign was a period in which many great changes were seen ; but they were changes silently made. This king, whose accession dates from A.D. 1485, was a man wholly unlike his more celebrated son. The latter, Henry VIII., was arrogant, wilful, and fond of great doings ; his father was cautious, silent, and more disposed to inactivity. The seventh Henry, in the latter years of his life, hoarded up a considerable treasure ; his son, in a very short space of time, gladly and boastfully expended it.

The reign of Henry VII. is an uninteresting story, so far as he himself was concerned ; but it was a period of momentous changes and transmutations with which he himself had little to do.

It was in this portion of European history that Copernicus explained to men "the Solar system." The art of warfare was rapidly experiencing

change.* Before the end of the century the Moorish empire in Spain came to a close ; and about the same time a new world was brought to light in America.

But more important than any of these changes had been, a few years earlier,—the fall of Constantinople. Until then the one honoured language in Europe was the Latin. The Greek language was scarcely known ; it seemed to belong to the East. But when the Greek scholars were driven out of the expiring empire, they came to Florence, and even to Oxford. Homer and Sophocles and Plato were made known to the Italian and French and English Universities ; and Erasmus and Colet began to read the Gospels in the language in which they had been written.

One change quickly followed another. Knygh-ton, in Wycliffe's days, thought it perilous and alarming that the Reformer should desire to place the New Testament, in their own language, “even in the hands of women.” But now, though little more than a century had elapsed, Erasmus, himself a Greek student, dared to say, to his friend Dean Colet, that he “could wish that every woman might learn to read the Gospels.” This change was one of unspeakable importance.

* “Artillery gave Henry VII. his easy victory over the Cornish insurgents.” Green's History, p. 295.

Another, and a still greater change, was beginning to show itself about the same time. To become acquainted with the Gospels and Epistles in the language in which they were written, was an important advance ; but to be able to have them in portable volumes, and at a small expense, was a still more desirable change. Wycliffe had given us the Bible in English ; but the cost of a single copy, in manuscript, would have been something like the purchase-money of a small house. This great difficulty was now about to disappear.

It was about A.D. 1460, or a few years after, that Guttenberg and Faust succeeded in first offering to the world printed books. About A.D. 1462, or 1466, they produced, at Mentz, printed copies of the Latin Vulgate (translated into German). Thus, for the first time, a printed Bible, in the language of the country, was put before the churches of Central Europe. Wycliffe had, indeed, preceded them in the work of translation ; but all his Bibles were in manuscript ; the art of printing being undiscovered until the latter half of the following century.

The printing-press was brought into England by Caxton a few years after it had been used in Germany ; but it was, undoubtedly, known to him that "Wycliffe's Bible" was a prohibited book. It was not until sixty years after, that the whole

Bible, in a printed volume, was given to the people, "by Royal Authority."

The accession of the Tudor dynasty and the beginning of Caxton's career as a printer in Westminster, nearly coincide in point of time.

Colet was born about A.D. 1466, and he became Dean of St. Paul's in A.D. 1502. His friend Erasmus was born about the same or the following year. Both of these remarkable men preached boldly, and in the highest places, "the Bible, open and intelligible to all." "I wish," said Erasmus, "that even the weakest woman might read the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul. I wish that they were translated into all languages."* What a change from the Romish doctrine of a century before, when Knyghton and Walsingham, the Romish Chroniclers, declared it to be the chief of all Wycliffe's sins that he had placed the Gospels, in English, within the reach "*even of women!*"

But the "time of refreshing," or rather of revival, had come, or, at least, there were signs of its approach. It will be seen, when we come to speak of more recent days, that any great moral change is usually preceded by the appearance of many men suited to the work. So St. Paul had told us—

"He gave to some apostles, and to some pro-

* Green's History, p. 308.

phets, and to some evangelists, and to some pastors and teachers.”—Ephes. iv. 11.

We are speaking more especially, but not exclusively, of England, and of the days of Henry VII., A.D. 1485–1509. But we must not wholly exclude from our view the rest of Europe. It was in the last days of the century, A.D. 1499, that Savonarola, a Dominican monk, was burnt at Florence. It was in 1489 that John Wesselus, of Groningen—called “the forerunner of Luther”—died in peace, chiefly because Pope Sixtus IV. admired him. The birth of Luther took place in A.D. 1483; the birth of Melancthon in A.D. 1497. And, while our Henry VIII. was still priding himself on being an advocate of the Papacy, the Germans were putting into written form “the Hundred Grievances of Germany.” Shortly after this the Elector Frederick wrote to his ambassador at Rome such words as these—

“Germany is no longer what it has been; it is full of accomplished men in all the sciences. The people exhibit an extraordinary passion for reading the Scriptures.”*

We return to the prospects of England. We have already said that towards the end of Henry VII.’s reign Dean Colet, in St. Paul’s Cathedral, read public lectures on St. Paul’s epistles, which

* Dean Waddington’s History, p. 719.

implied a belief that his hearers knew something of that proscribed book, "Wycliffe's Bible." And his friend Erasmus could write of the books of Holy Scripture, "I long for the day when the husbandman shall repeat portions of them to himself as he follows the plough ; when the weaver shall hum them to the tune of his shuttle" ; and a modern writer adds that "the New Testament of Erasmus became the topic of the day." *

We return to the thought that when the Church's Lord intends to grant a needed Revival, He does not, now, act miraculously, but Providentially. In agreement with this conviction, we notice the preparation, the appearance of various men of piety, or earnest devotion, and of fitness for the work which was very soon to be set before them. We dwell once more on this reign, that of Henry VII., A.D. 1485-1509, and remark a few of the names which must pass before us when we come to describe the remarkable events of his son's days. We shall merely observe, in this place, that Latimer was born in A.D. 1485 ; Tyndale in 1486 ; Coverdale in 1487 ; Cranmer in 1489 ; Ridley in 1499, and Matthew Parker in 1504.

These were some, but only some, of the remarkable men who were born in the days of Henry VII.—in that same period which gave to Germany

* Green's History, p. 308.

Luther and Melancthon and Peter Martyr and Justus Jonas, and several other men of like character, and which gave to both countries the printing-press.

Meanwhile, we can hardly overlook the fact that while several men of talent and energy and sincere piety were being granted to the English and German churches, it was also permitted that the Papacy should become, year by year, more hateful, more revolting. Both Dean Waddington and Dean Milman concur in deeming Pope Nicholas V. (a respectable Pope) to have been the last deserving that character. "With him the Papal power commenced its visible decline." In A.D. 1484 Innocent VIII. was chosen Pope, "the price of every vote being previously arranged, when the College of Cardinals proceeded to invoke the Holy Spirit." *

"Innocent introduced a revolting race of dependants, in the persons of his illegitimate offspring. Seven children, born of various amours, became pensioners on the ecclesiastical treasury." "In the downward progress we descend to Alexander VI., and here we are arrested by the utmost limits which have been assigned to Papal depravity." † This was, be it observed, in A.D. 1503, that being still in the reign of our Henry VII.

* Dean Waddington's History, p. 649. † Ibid. p. 650.

But the increasing depravity of the Romish Court was but one feature of the case. While the Papacy was growing more and more profligate and revolting, a new life was seen to be springing up, both in Germany and in England. Thus Dean Milman says—

“At the time of Nicholas V. (A.D. 1447-1455) became manifest the great revolution within Latin Christianity itself, which was eventually to be fatal, at least to its universal dominion. His Papacy closed the age of mediæval letters.” (p. 100.)

“The most serious result was the revelation of the Greek Testament, necessarily followed by that of the Hebrew Scriptures and the dawn of a wider Biblical criticism. The Vulgate receded, and, with the Vulgate, Latin Christianity began to withdraw.”

“Just at this period the two great reformers (the inventor of printing and the manufacturer of paper) had both commenced and perfected their inventions. Books, hitherto slow and costly productions, became cheap, were multiplied with rapidity, and were accessible to thousands to whom manuscripts were unapproachable.” Dean Milman adds—

“I pretend not to foretel the future of Christianity, but whosoever believes in its perpetuity

(and to disbelieve it were treason against its Divine Author and apostacy from the faith), must suppose that by some Providential law it must adapt itself to all vicissitudes and phases of man's social and moral being.” *

Assuredly, an angel (such an one as visited Daniel, in B.C. 534), if he had been permitted to range over and survey the earth in the days of our Henry VII., without any certain knowledge of the future, would have been very likely to remark, on leaving, “I do not profess to know what has not been revealed to me; but I think that I can see that some great change is near at hand, in that part of the earth which they call Europe, in religious matters—in those organizations which they are in the habit of calling ‘the Church,’ or Churches.” And, in so saying, he would have given utterance to a very reasonable belief.

* Dean Milman's Latin Christianity, vol. ix. pp. 100, 346, 348, 350.

III.

UNDER THE TUDOR FAMILY.

WE are, perhaps, rather too apt to think and to speak of the Eighth Henry in our list of kings, as the author, or at least, the beginner, of our English Reformation. And this, although it is a mistake, is not a palpable mistake. HENRY VIII. gave to Cranmer the Archbishopsric of Canterbury, and it was by his authority that an English Bible was printed and published, and the Word of God “was formally adopted as the basis of English faith.”*

With these two facts before us it can hardly be a matter of surprise that Henry VIII. should be taken by some persons to have been “our first Protestant King.” Nevertheless, it is a great mistake:—Henry’s mission was not to *build*, but to *destroy*. It is a wonderful fact that in the last fourteen years of his reign he accomplished the two remarkable exploits, of separating his kingdom

* Green’s History, p. 332.

from the church of Rome ; and of clearing monasticism out of England.

To accomplish these two great achievements a man of a remarkable kind was needed. He must be a man of a strong will and of a strong right arm. His chief characteristic must be that which was seen in the Eighth Henry throughout. It was, says Bishop Short, "want of self-restraint." His favourite minister, Wolsey, in his dying hours said of him, "He is a prince of a most royal courage ; sooner than miss any part of his will, he will endanger one-half of his kingdom." In his youth he had been espoused by his father to a Spanish princess eight years older than himself. He lived with her for more than twenty years, but found at their close, no male successor to the crown. He then began to suppose that his marriage with a princess who had been the wife of his brother, might have been an unlawful act, and that the failure of a male heir might have been a punishment Divinely ordained. He applied to the Pope —the universal referee in those days—but the Pope refused to listen to his suggestions. He then asked the opinion of the Universities, and finding their judgment consistent with his own, he declared his former marriage to have been unlawful, and took for his second wife Anne Boleyn.

This was the first decided instance of his resolu-

tion to carry into execution his own purposes, whatever they might be.

The Papacy withheld his desire, and at once he pushed the Papacy aside.

A second great controversy soon followed. The monastic orders everywhere looked to the Pope as their head, and obeyed the King only so far as the Papacy permitted it.

The English monasteries were now almost twelve hundred in number.* Their members and servants must have been many thousands. Their estates were deemed to be equal to one-third part of the land of England. Their tenants must have been reckoned by myriads.

To deal with such a body could have been no easy or insignificant thing. And they were everywhere the Pope's adherents, his garrisons in England.

But those houses were also notoriously abodes of luxury and vice. Fifty years before this king's time, "Pope Innocent VIII. had written to Archbishop Morton, directing him to reform the religious orders ; and the pastoral letter addressed to the Abbot of St. Alban's furnishes a sad picture of the depravity which reigned within these walls."[†]

A natural and befitting course was now at once

* Bishop Short's History, p. 138. † Ibid. p. 73.

taken. A commission was forthwith appointed to inquire into and report the state of all the monastic establishments in England. The result was certain beforehand. With very few exceptions, they were found to be resorts of luxury, immorality, and sometimes of disgusting crimes. There could be no answer—no defence. The judgment, the punishment, was immediate; the monasteries everywhere in the course of a few years were dismantled, and their vast estates distributed among the favourites of the court; a few being applied to higher and nobler uses.

Thus in the course of ten or twelve years two immense changes had been wrought in this land.

1. England had ceased to be the vassal of the Papacy. The Crown had declared its independence.

2. The Roman garrisons—the inhabitants of a thousand fortresses, scattered over the length and breadth of the land—were broken up; were abolished, and the power of Rome in England had practically ceased; had disappeared.

These two great achievements were the distinguishing features of Henry's reign; and, wonderful to relate, they were accomplished in less than a dozen years. They stamp the King's character chiefly as a Destroyer. It is but bare justice to add, as a destroyer of Evil. This was distinctly

his mission. Only such a king, arrogant, wilful, and possessing “a strong right arm” could have done such a work. And he was given to England exactly when he was needed ; and then, when a few great leading dogmas had been established, he was taken away. Among those prominent principles and purposes the foremost were, the supremacy of God’s Word, and by consequence the printing and circulation of it by royal authority ; the construction of a set of Articles on the leading doctrines of Christianity, and the preparation of a volume of homilies or sermons for the use of the parochial clergy, most of whom were then in a state of great ignorance. These, and many other needful things were suggested to the king by a humble, modest, and enlightened man, Thomas Cranmer, who had found favour in Henry’s sight.

But in all this wonderful series of events, in themselves contrary to all reasonable expectation, we must not shut our eyes to the working of an overruling hand. Bishop Short justly remarks at this point of the history that—

“ The English Protestant cannot withhold the tribute of thanksgiving to the Author of all good, from whom this great deliverance sprung ; nor fail to remark its progress, so contrary to the expectations of human foresight.”

Three thousand years before the days of Henry VIII. Job had said,—

“ Who knoweth not, in all these, that the hand of the Lord hath wrought this ; in Whose hand is the soul of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind. With Him is wisdom and strength : He hath counsel and understanding. He breaketh down and it cannot be built again ; he shutteth up a man and there can be no opening. He leadeth councillors away spoiled, and maketh the judges fools. He leadeth princes away spoiled, and overthroweth the mighty. He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them. He enlargeth the nations and straiteneth them again. He taketh away the heart of the people, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way.”
(Job xii.)

We have spoken of the wondrous mercy granted to England in the personal character of the king who immediately preceded the Reformation. A period of vast and invaluable change was approaching ; but, first of all, a work of preparation was needful, was essential. Great and momentous as we now see it to have been—how wondrous does the delay appear, when we look back upon it. Very early in Henry VIII.’s reign, Wolsey, a zealous partisan of the Papacy, became the king’s

confidential adviser. For fifteen years he maintained that high position. Then he suddenly lost it, and died. But Henry had meanwhile spent more than half of his reign. Little more than a dozen years remained to him. Nevertheless, in that short space of time did this vehement, impetuous, and wilful king dethrone the Pope from any longer reigning over England ; seize upon a thousand fortresses, manned by the Pope's adherents ; declare himself the absolute head of the visible church in England, and, finally, proceed to change its doctrines at his own will and pleasure !

Much of all this was entirely indefensible ; but Henry's mission was, not to create, but to destroy ; and in *this* he was marvellously successful. His three children, who were soon to follow him, were, each of them, more worthy of respect than himself ; inasmuch as they acted with more sincerity and less regard to personal interests.

The first, EDWARD VI., was called to the throne when he was only a child of nine years old ; and he died before he was sixteen. He showed much of his father's courage, and some degree of his wilfulness. He had been suitably educated, and was not deficient in talent : but, above all, he was sincerely religious, and had such men as Cranmer and Cheke as his advisers. His real mission was to prepare and partly to fill up the outline, the

frame-work of the Protestant Church of England. This he accomplished in the six years, during which his youthful reign was prolonged. Politically viewed, that reign was an unhappy, a disastrous one. His two uncles, the brothers of his mother, both coveted, and in turn gained the chief share in the government. The history of these six years would be both intricate and painful. The one point on which alone we desire to dwell is that which we have indicated. While the selfish politicians of the day, Somerset, Seymour, and Warwick, were ceaselessly planning for their own advancement, the youthful king himself and his friend, Thomas Cranmer, were devoting their thoughts and plans to the nobler object of replacing the Papal Church which had been abolished by a Protestant Church ; the rudimental outline of that which Elizabeth afterwards matured and established ; and which has endured from that day to the times in which we are now living.

In the very first year of Edward's reign, "Injunctions" came forth, doubtless framed by Cranmer's own hand, "intending the advancement of the true honour of Almighty God, and the suppression of idolatry and superstition through all these realms and dominions."

"The first is, that all ecclesiastical persons shall faithfully keep and observe all laws and statutes

made for the abolition and extirpation of the Bishop of Rome and his usurped power and jurisdiction ; and for the establishment of the king's authority and jurisdiction, and his supremacy of the Church of England and Ireland."

"Also, that they shall provide within three months, one book of the whole Bible, of the largest volume in English. This, with Erasmus's paraphrase of the Gospels, shall be set up in some convenient place in every church, so that the parishioners may commodiously resort to and read the same."

As "first principles," then, we observe, at the very outset, these two ideas plainly declared and set forth: 1. The abolition of the usurped power and jurisdiction of the Bishop of Rome, commonly called the Pope ; and 2, the setting forth as the one infallible guide and instructor the Word of God.

"As one natural result of these two principles, we find, three years after, an order 'given under the Royal signet at our palace of Westminster, in this fourth year of our reign,' Thomas Cranmer being then Archbishop of Canterbury, and Nicholas Ridley, Bishop of London, 'to give substantial order throughout all your diocese, that with all diligence all the altars in every church or chapel be taken down ; and instead of them a table be set up for the ministration of the Holy Communion.'

These two documents are sufficient to prove that this son and successor of Henry VIII. was sincerely and earnestly a Protestant, and that it is to him and his advisers in church matters that we owe it, that in so few years after the departure of Cardinal Wolsey, a church was organized and brought into operation in England, identical with that which has lasted unto this day.

Very soon, the use of images in churches and public places was questioned and censured, and in many places the work of destruction was at once begun. The next question was the lawfulness and propriety of the masses for the dead. Injunctions were issued to the clergy to take down all images which had been abused by false devotion, and to avoid all customs which tended to superstition. And now, to supply the present deficiency of preachers, the book of Homilies was published, and the bishops were enjoined "to admit none to orders who were not qualified, especially in the matter of preaching"*

Soon after, "a statute was passed on the Communion-services, in which it was ordained that the laity should receive in both kinds; and that no private masses should be celebrated."† Edward's second year commenced with several important steps. "Directions were issued for the

* Bishop Short, pp. 165, 166.

† Ibid. p. 167.

removal of all images, as well as for the suppression of many superstitious ceremonies. In March, the Communion service was published, and it does not essentially differ from the one now in use.”*

“This year,” says a contemporary, “the Archbishop of Canterbury did eat meat openly in Lent in the Hall of Lambeth, the like of which was never seen since England was a Christian country. The legal prohibitions of Lollardism were repealed; a royal injunction removed all pictures and images from the churches; priests were permitted to marry; the Book of Common Prayer replaced the Missal and the Breviary; a Catechism and the Book of Homilies were appointed to be read.”†

“In A.D. 1549 an act, confirming the use of the Liturgy, authorised the use of psalms or hymns taken out of the Bible; and this usage, now first commenced, became a marked characteristic of the favourers of the Reformation.”‡

In all these proceedings, it is worthy of remark, that the young prince, in whose name all these things were done, was no indifferent or careless spectator. It is quite certain,—it is beyond all doubt, that of all the kings that England had ever known during a thousand years, there was no

* Bishop Short, pp. 168, 169.

† Green's History, pp. 350, 351.

‡ Bishop Short, p. 172.

one who had ever shown so great, or so constant, an adherence to the faith of the Bible as did Edward VI. Two occurrences, happening not far apart, exhibit in him, both an earnestness, a deep sincerity, which is not common among men ; and also a thoughtfulness, a reference in all things, to the teaching of Holy Scripture which is not often exceeded, in what we have been accustomed to call “our Protestant days.”

In A.D. 1549 a poor woman, Joan Bocher, or Jane Boucher, of Kent, was accused of holding and disseminating certain peculiar notions concerning the divinity of Christ. She was brought before a commission, appointed to deal with such matters, of which Cranmer was the president. She refused all concessions, and maintained her original views. The Council could not but condemn her, and the law, at that time, deemed her offence a capital one, and condemned her to die. Cranmer, as president, had to place the warrant for her execution before the king. The youthful sovereign, then only in his twelfth year, signed the warrant with tears in his eyes ; reminding Cranmer, that if the act was sinful, he, Cranmer, must, in the first place, answer for it before God.

A year after a different question arose, but one which exhibited again the young king’s earnestness and sincerity. In March, 1551, the Princess

Mary, the senior of the king by several years, appeared before the Council, to claim the privilege of having Mass said, in the worship of her household. The Council wished to comply with her request, and sent Cranmer and Ridley to obtain the royal assent. But the firm conviction of Edward that the adoration of the bread and wine was idolatrous, concurred with that tenacity which belonged to the Tudor family ; and “he burst into tears, declaring his willingness rather to resign his crown than to disobey the commandments of the Most High.”*

In Church matters, the progress made in this short reign (A.D. 1547-1553) by Cranmer and Ridley was very great, and it was of vast importance. Protestantism gained more in five years than the more cautious Elizabeth would have granted in ten. But in civil affairs the reign was one of great misgovernment. “The Lord Protector” and his Council did very much as they pleased, and in so doing they followed their own selfish and covetous desires. A king of ten or twelve years of age could not control a Duke of Somerset or a Duke of Northumberland, acting as Viceroy, with a Council of great lords at his back. Towards the end of his reign, when he was entering his fourteenth or fifteenth year, he

* Bishop Short, p. 192.

might, perhaps, have been more disposed to follow his father's example—his father's self-reliance and inflexibility ; but it was now too late. Mr. Green observes that—

“ Politics were dying down into the squabbles of a knot of nobles over the spoils of the Church and the Crown. Half the lands of every See were flung to them in vain ; but while the courtiers gorged themselves with manors, the Treasury grew poorer. The coinage was debased. Crown lands to the value of five millions of our modern money had been granted away to the friends of Somerset and Warwick. It is clear that England must soon have risen against the misrule of the Protectorate, if the Protectorate had not fallen by the intestine divisions of the plunderers themselves.”*

This reign, then, if considered as a chapter in politics, was a disastrous and shameful one ; or such language as we have just quoted could not have been applied to it. But if we view it as a portion of religious history, it is altogether of a different kind. Several honest, religious, and disinterested men, Cranmer and Ridley being among the foremost, were placed by the Providence of God, at the helm of His Church ; and they effected, in five or six years, a great and inestimable change. Of the extent of this change one chief proof is

* Green's History, p. 353.

seen in this fact, that what they made the Church, in that space of time, it has remained ever since. And, more than this, the Christianity which, in our Prayer Book, Homilies, and Articles of Faith, they put before the country three hundred and fifty years ago, has since been spread, by myriads of God's servants, far and wide, to the very "ends of the earth."

The actual position, the enlightenment or bewilderment of God's great enemy, has long been a question of too great difficulty for man's understanding. Two facts, recorded in the Gospels, make it evident that Satan knows *much*, and yet does not know *all*. At the beginning of Christ's Ministry, and of His active life, "He was in the wilderness, tempted of Satan" (Mark i. 13). And in His first encounter, "the Tempter said to Him, '*If* Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.'" Here the Tempter expresses a suspicion, and makes an enquiry. He knows something, and yet is in doubt.

At the closing period of Christ's ministry we hear of the Tempter again. "The devil having now put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot to betray Him."—John xiii. 2.

Did the enemy know, in the least, what he was doing? Did he understand, at all, that in con-

triving Christ's death, he was contriving *that* which should, in the result, be the destruction of his (the Tempter's) own kingdom?

And now, in this portion of England's history, a similar question arises. Mary, the child of a Spanish princess, was, like her mother, a devoted adherent of the Papacy. Among the people of the country from whence that mother came, heresy, as the Protestant faith was termed, was put down,—was extirpated by fire and sword. The Church's great enemy, doubtless, saw the natural and legal accession of the new queen with hope and exultation. And many Protestants, both then and to the present hour—looking to the cruel deaths of aged bishops, of women, and of children—are apt to think, ordinarily, of the five years' reign of "bloody Mary" as the saddest, the gloomiest chapter in all England's annals. Yet there is a very different view which may reasonably be taken.

First, let us briefly set forth its chief events. On July 6, 1553, by Edward's death, the crown devolved on his sister Mary. But it was not until the 19th that an attempted opposition collapsed, and she was proclaimed throughout London. In these earlier days of her reign the queen made some rash promises "that she would force no one's religion"—promises drawn from her by

fear ; but these pledges she soon found it scarcely possible to keep.

Bonner, who quickly became the chief persecutor, took possession of St. Paul's on August 5th, and soon each day saw some new step taken to get rid of the religion of Cranmer and Ridley ; and to place that of Gardiner and Cardinal Pole in its room.

But in matters of State some forms requiring time had to be encountered at every step. Parliament met October 5 ; and the first thing the Queen asked of it was, to re-establish the legality of her father's marriage. The next step was reconciliation with the Court of Rome. Then various statutes passed in Edward's reign needed repeal.

Within three months after her accession the queen, who had been constantly in communication with the Spanish Ambassador, had promised to marry the Prince Philip of Spain ; and in January, 1554, Bishop Gardiner was authorized to declare this engagement to the Parliament. No great difficulty was found in that assembly ; but in a very few days, news came of a rising in Devonshire, and another in Kent. These were crushed, but they afforded sufficient ground for the imprisonment of the Princess Elizabeth.

In July, 1554, the Spanish prince arrived at Southampton, and the marriage took place a few

days afterwards. Various matters required Parliamentary sanction, and the Houses met in November. Little difficulty was found in persuading them to re-enact the old laws against heretics, and to agree to new statutes against "seditious words." And thus the year 1554 closed—the queen's second year. The difficulties in entering on the great task of "the extirpation of heresy" had all been cleared away; and now, with the opening of A.D. 1555, that work, the main object with both Mary and her husband, was expected to commence.

The new statutes against heretics were to come into force on the 20th January. Shortly before that day, "Bonner, with eight other bishops and one hundred and sixty priests, made a grand procession through London, to return thanks to God for the renewal of His grace to the land." The next thing was a Commission, held in the Church of St. Mary Overy, Southwark, for the trial of the Protestants. The first man brought before this Commission was John Rogers, Prebendary of St. Paul's, who was at once sentenced to the flames. The next two were Bishop Hooper, of Gloucester, and Bishop Ferrar, of St. David's. These were ordered to be sent, severally, to Gloucester and St. David's, where they were burned, on February 9 and March 30.

But we cannot enter into any further details ; nor are they necessary. Most of our readers know full well that between the 4th of February, 1555, when Rogers was burned, and the 17th of November, 1558, when this poor, unhappy queen died, a continual endeavour to extirpate heresy was carried on. In the three years of the persecution three hundred victims had perished at the stake. The people sickened at the work of death. The crowd round the fires at Smithfield exclaimed “Amen !” to the prayer of the last seven martyrs whom Bonner had condemned ; and prayed “that God would strengthen them.”

Every death at the stake won hundreds to the cause of the victims. “You have lost the hearts of twenty thousand that were rank Papists !” wrote one of the spectators to Bonner,* not long after one of these burnt-offerings.

Still, “Mary had no thought of hesitation in the work she had begun. ‘Rattling letters’ from the queen roused the lagging prelates to fresh persecutions, and in three months fifty more victims were hurried to their doom.”†

But the mere cruelties thus continually paraded in the market-places formed only a portion, and probably only a small portion, of the barbarities of what we call “the Marian persecution.” For

* Green’s History, p. 359. † Ibid. p. 359.

one person who resolved at the outset that he would be firm,—that he would abide the consequences, there were five or ten who hoped to “take a middle course.” Hundreds of these, known to be “Protestants at heart,” hesitated, faltered, and helped to fill the prisons, everywhere, with “suspected heretics.” It is probable that as many died of prison diseases and prison starvation as were burned at the stake. But a third class was more numerous than either of the other two. These were the men who had no intention of returning to the Mass or to priestly absolution ; but who dreaded the thought of being burned in Smithfield. These, it is a matter admitting of no doubt, were far more numerous than the sufferers at the stake, or in the prison.

During the three years and a half of active persecution, “there had perished at the stake not fewer than two hundred and ninety individuals, among whom were five bishops, twenty-one clergymen, eight lay gentlemen, fifty-five women, and four children. And multitudes of the most pious and enlightened members of society fled from a land where there was no safety for their lives, and took refuge in Denmark, Switzerland, in Frankfurt, and in Geneva.” *

In reviewing the reign of Edward, we had to

* Gleig's Hist. England, vol. ii. p. 29.

remark that two very different views might be, or rather ought to be, taken of the six important years of what was called “his reign.” Taking a secular view, and studying chiefly the doings of the politicians of that time, the reign was a calamitous, an ignominious one. But, looking away from these, and studying the progress of the Church, departing from error and embracing Truth, it is difficult to feel aught but the deepest thankfulness. The like contrast, in the very next reign, is still more apparent—more striking.

To Mary herself, the queen, freed from an ill-defined sort of imprisonment, and raised, in a day, to Power, to nearly absolute Power, the change would naturally be a most welcome one, and chiefly because it would place within her reach that which was the main object of her life—the extirpation of “heresy” from her realm of England; and the bringing of that realm, intact and united, to throw itself at the footstool of her Holy Father the Pope. That object she kept in view, most perseveringly, during the whole five years of her reign.

Could she be otherwise than rejoiced at the possession of this power?—or could the great bystander, the Enemy, watching this progress, and these important changes, be aught else than exultant at the triumph which he supposed he

was just about to obtain? And yet both the Queen and her rejoicing Patron and Guide, in their mutual delight, were not only mistaken, but were as plainly working for defeat, as was Satan when he "entered into Judas Iscariot" and taught him "how he might betray Jesus unto the chief priests and elders."

Could the Queen, in her eagerness to begin her great undertaking, have mingled with her vehemence even a small amount of discretion, it seems to us as if she could scarcely have failed to obtain a great success. The whole power of the Crown, supported by the Parliament and the Administration, could hardly have been put forth in vain. But prudence would have counselled the avoidance of all kinds of persecution. Had the Protestants been merely discomfited and obstructed for so long a period, without intermission, they must have been largely, perhaps fatally, weakened and discouraged.

But Mary was permitted, for the wisest and best of all purposes, to show the real character of her own religion, so that there could be no mistake about the matter. At the opening of her reign the bulk of the people were with her, regarding chiefly the legitimacy of her claim to the throne. But at the end of her short reign "the loyalty which had seated her on the throne was

fast dying away, and open sympathy was shown to the sufferers for conscience' sake. The people sickened at the work of death." *

" Queen Mary left none to lament her, and there was not the semblance of sorrow for her loss. She died in the morning ; in the afternoon the bells of all the churches in London were rung for the accession of Elizabeth, and at night bonfires were made, and tables set out in the streets, at which the citizens caroused." †

Two steps, then, of vast importance, had been taken between Henry's death, in A.D. 1547, and his daughter Mary's death, in A.D. 1558. His son Edward's reign showed, in the course of six short years, what Protestantism and a Protestant Government was likely to be. Owing to the misconduct of the politicians, the mere statesmen of the day, the people could scarcely understand or appreciate this ; but, at least, they might see that the Bible was to be honoured and sent abroad, and that men and women were not to be burned for believing, or for not believing, Transubstantiation.

A total change took place when the young king died, and his elder sister, a fanatical Papist, came in his room. She was sincere and in earnest, but the blindness of her zeal soon made her religion

* Green's History, p. 361.

† Southey's Book of the Church, vol. ii. p. 242.

hateful to the people. In three or four years she rendered the rule of Rome in England utterly intolerable.

And now came a third child of the Eighth Henry. His younger daughter, ELIZABETH, was, like Edward, and like Mary, educated and wilful ; but she had far more statesmanship than either of them, while, sad to say, she had scarcely as much earnestness or inflexibility.

“ She was,” says Bishop Short, “ perhaps the greatest sovereign who ever sat upon the throne of England.” * “ There never was,” adds Von Ranke, “ a sovereign who maintained a conflict of world-wide importance, amidst greater dangers and with greater success, than Queen Elizabeth.” And the result was what might have been anticipated. “ Never had the fortunes of England sunk to a lower ebb,” says Mr. Green, “ than when Elizabeth mounted the throne.” But after she had reigned forty years he is able to change his tone, and to say that, “ while England became a nest of singing-birds at home, the last years of her reign were years of splendour and triumph abroad.” †

Nor was this wonderful change and advance-

* Bishop Short’s History, p. 315.

† Green’s Hist. of England, pp. 362, 430.

ment either accidental or unintelligible. Herself sagacious and clear-sighted, she chose, at once, counsellors of like quality. "No nobler group of Ministers ever gathered round a Council-board than those who gathered round the chair of Elizabeth." But it was her choice,—her judgment, that called them there. And now that she had formed, probably, the wisest council that ever sovereign had, she is not ruled by it—she simply finds in it that which she needed. "She listens, she weighs, she uses or puts by the counsels of each in turn; but her policy, as a whole, is her own." *

But we cannot even sketch the outline of a history which was full of events, and which lasted, to England's unspeakable benefit, for four-and-forty years. We are speaking, as briefly as we can, of "the Reformation;" and we must limit ourselves to those portions of Elizabeth's history which had a bearing on that great series of inestimable changes.

Two leading features in the history of this reign are, each of them, plainly attributable to the goodness of Divine Providence. The last two reigns had been brief ones—limited to five or six years in each case; but now, a remarkably wise and sagacious monarch being raised up, a con-

* Green, p. 364.

tinuance for almost half a century is granted. Regulation and Establishment being the two things which the Church, as a human institution, chiefly needed, a long and quiet persistency in one course was graciously yielded to her. A second boon was perhaps even more important than the first. That the queen should have, during all her long reign, men provided for her who could worthily fill the Primacy, was a more than ordinary bounty, granted by the Church's Head. During a thousand years England had seen, though not very frequently, eminent Christians raised up and prepared for her leading Archbishopric ; but that *three* such men as Parker, Grindal, and Whitgift should all have been brought to Elizabeth's knowledge in the course of forty years, shews a provision made by the All-Seeing Eye, for which the Church of England has never expressed any befitting gratitude.

These primates of the church were, each in his turn, practically the leaders, the guides of the nation. They followed Wycliffe in his two main objects :—To give the Bible to the people ; and to send among them preachers of the gospel, followers of “the Seventy” whose mission is described in Luke x.

The Bible had been nominally opened to the people in the latter years of Henry VIII.'s reign,

and again in the briefer rule of his son. But these glimpses of it were but momentary. Such a gracious revealing to a whole nation was not to be made in a month or in a year, or in seven years. A whole reign, a long reign was required, and now, under Elizabeth and under Parker and his successors, it was granted.

Sunday after Sunday, day after day, the crowds that gathered round the Bibles in the nave of St. Paul's were leavened with a new literature. *Its effect was simply amazing.* The whole temper of the nation was changed. A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class. Grotius and Casaubon agree on this point. "Theology rules there," said the first. "There is a great abundance of theologians in England," writes the latter, "all point their studies in that direction. The nation became, in fact, a Church."*

London, indeed, had seen something of this, in a year or two of Henry's reign, and in a year or two of Edward's; but now, the Bible, upheld in the church as the divine teacher, became a permanent, an established institution. And not in London only, but in other cities and throughout the land. And this was but a part,—but a small part. The printing-presses were becoming many, and edi-

* Green's History, p. 447-449.

tions of the Bible, in various shapes and sizes, were continually coming forth. When Elizabeth's sister, Mary, ascended the throne in A.D. 1553, the people were, in the main, Roman Catholic. They had seen, they had known little as yet of any other religion. But in less than five years that queen, Mary, had aroused, in very many places, a deep disgust at the religion which burnt aged bishops, and women and young children in the market-places; and the people rejoiced when they saw the Bonners and Gardiners driven away. In ten years after, the Bible had been read, the Bible had been printed, and now the Bible might be bought by all who wished for it. No wonder need be felt if we find a great and inestimable change passing over the people. Wycliffe's first object was now being realized.

But his second was hardly less important. The great Author of Christianity left us the gospels, but he left us the apostles and "the Seventy" also. And now it was quickly seen that in raising up, in the same series of years, a Parker, a Grindal, and a Whitgift, he was intending to give to the English Church "the Seventy," whom England sorely needed. And hence the historian has to notice, before Elizabeth has reigned many years, "a remarkable change in the religious temper of the nation."

“It was in the years we are traversing that England became firmly Protestant. The quiet decay of the traditionary Catholicism, which formed the religion of the people at Elizabeth's accession, went ceaselessly on, aided by the gradual dying out of the Catholic priesthood and the growth of a Protestant clergy who supplied their place.”

“The lapse of twenty years did its work in emptying parsonage after parsonage, and the careful supervision of Parker and the bishops ensured a change in the clergy who took the place of the vanishing priesthood.”

“The zeal of the young ministers showed itself in an assiduous preaching, which moulded the religious ideas of the new generation.” “The energy of the primate, seconded by the general increase of zeal and morality, did its work, and by the close of Elizabeth's reign the moral temper as well as the social character of the clergy had wholly changed. Scholars like Hooker, gentlemen like George Herbert, could now be found in the ranks of the priesthood; and the scandals which had disgraced the clergy as a body, had for the most part disappeared.”*

As might have been expected, therefore, the people were transformed as well as their teachers. “England became the people of a book, and that

* Green's History, p. 399.

book was the Bible. Soon it was the one English book which was familiar to every Englishman. It was read at church and read at home, and its words, falling upon ears which custom had not deadened to their force and beauty, kindled a startling enthusiasm.”* “The whole temper of the nation was changed. A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class.”†

Parker and Grindal merely followed the course which Wycliffe, two centuries before, had indicated, had recommended. But Wycliffe had been nothing more than a country parson—the rector of Lutterworth—while these two archbishops were the counsellors, the directors of the national church; and behind them stood nearly the wisest and the strongest sovereign that England had ever known. The practical difference, therefore, was, that while Wycliffe had seen and had counselled the truth, and the way, it was left to Parker and to Grindal to make it a practical—a visible reality.

We have already said that the government and the church policy of Elizabeth’s reign would require a volume for its description and its justification, and this we cannot give. It must suffice to say, that while this reign established and matured the Church of England, which we now know and

* Green’s History, p. 447.

† Ibid. p. 449.

value, it left the realm also, a commencing and a growing empire. The commerce of England, the colonies of England, her mighty Asiatic empire, and at home her literature, her theology, her civilization, all sprang forth, and began to grow, just when "England became the country of a book, and that book the Bible."

The inhabitant of some far-distant land—the student born in Chili or in Japan, when he essays to gain some notion of the world's history, is sure, when his mind rests for a moment upon the well-known name of England, to find two other far-famed names associated with it. These are (1) the name of India, that great empire of the East, which comprises a population equal to all Europe; and (2) America, the United States, which is already the equal or the superior of France, of Spain, and of Germany. Now, when do these names first meet the eye, in the history of our own land?

An English commander, Raleigh, sent seven ships to North America in A.D. 1584, and commenced, unsuccessfully at first, the colony of Virginia. That state or colony became English a few years after; and it is now a chief state in the United States, a commonwealth which expects to have, before the end of this century, a population of one hundred millions of souls.

India was, at that same time, regarded naturally as a vast Asiatic land or empire ; but one which, from its immensity, would require a long-protracted study and exploration. Hence, in A.D. 1600 a company or society was formed in London, called “The East India Company.” That company grew and increased for more than two centuries, and it has, not many years since, handed over to the Crown of England possessions in Hindustan, “having an area of 1,486,339 square miles, and a population of 256,000,000.

England, then, in this reign of forty years, first became itself prosperous, happy, and in a degree, religious ; it gained also glimpses, though they could not be more than glimpses, of those distant, but wondrous climes, America and India, which have grown ever since, till their history and their progress occupies a large part of the nation’s future.



ENGLAND'S TRAINING.

IV.

DECLENSION—

- I.—THE STUARTS.
- II.—THE REVOLUTION.
- III.—THE HANOVERIAN KINGS.



I.

THE STUARTS.

ON Elizabeth's death, a total and deplorable change took place. Not suddenly, indeed ; not resembling a revolution. Quietly, without the slightest opposition, James, the King of Scotland, one of the descendants of Henry VII., Elizabeth's grandfather, took the English throne amidst a general assent, and retained it until his death in A.D. 1625. He was succeeded by his son, Charles I., and then by his grandsons, Charles II. and James II., and the latter by his two daughters. Limiting our view to the four kings, we may say, without hesitation, that they were four of the worst who ever sat upon the English throne, and the close of their history was deservedly—expulsion.

We are reminded, at this point of our narrative, of two different courses taken by the Divine Ruler of the universe, under different circumstances. The first is, action, the second is, abstention. An instance of each is found in the earlier books of the Bible.

1. In Exodus II. we read, that "in Egypt the children of Israel sighed by reason of the bondage, and their cry came up to God." Soon we hear that "the Lord said unto Moses in the desert, 'I have seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and I have come down to deliver them.'" In the course of the next twelve chapters we read the wondrous story of how that deliverance was wrought. "Thus the Lord saved Israel out of the hands of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore" (chap. xiv. 30). This was an instance of the Divine Action.

2. But in the Book of Judges we read how "that generation passed away, and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the Lord, nor the works which he had done for Israel." "And they forsook the Lord, and served Baal and Ashtaroth." And the Lord said, "I will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died." This was the Divine Abstention.

Something resembling this is seen in the history of England in the sixteenth century. First four sovereigns in succession ; working out, each after the other, a wondrous change in the land. Then, not by any special providence, but by mere ordinary succession, a different race succeeds, and a wholly different result follows.

Closing his review of Elizabeth's reign, Bishop Short had said :—

“ The feeling which the more attentive study of these times is calculated to inspire, is the conviction of the superintendence of Providence over the church of Christ.”*

But when he comes to consider the successive sovereigns of the Stuart race, he is forced to lament the incapacity, the helplessness, each in turn, of these four kings : “ James might, perhaps, have proved a good king, if his weakness as a man had not rendered it almost impossible for him to perform the duties of his station.”†

And yet it was this helpless person who could tell his Parliament, in A.D. 1610, “ That, as it was blasphemy to dispute what God may do ; so it is sedition, in subjects, to dispute what a king may do in the plenitude of his power.”‡

Had this new sort of king been in any point of view deserving of respect, the case would have been different ; but the fact was not so. “ His big head, his slobbering tongue, his ricketty legs, his goggle eyes, stood out in as grotesque a contrast to all that men recalled of Henry or Elizabeth, as did his gabble and rhodomontade, his

* Bishop Short's Church Hist. p. 318.

† Ibid. p. 366.

‡ Rapin, vol. ii.

coarse buffoonery, his drunkenness, his pedantry, or his cowardice." "He had the temper of a pedant, and with it a pedant's love of theories, and a pedant's inability to bring his theories into any relation with actual facts."* While the king claimed to be, by divine right, infallible and despotic, his court was the home of revolting grossness. He was known to be an habitual drunkard, and suspected of other vices. Ladies of high rank copied the royal manners, and rolled intoxicated at the king's feet. The reverence with which the sovereign had been regarded in Tudor times died away into abhorrence and contempt."†

No wonder, then, that Puritanism began to be regarded as the only solid faith ; and that flight from England was more than thought of. The first settlement on the Chesapeake dates from the reign of James I. The first party of settlers comprised, out of 105, forty-eight gentlemen, and we may safely reckon that the larger part of these were Puritans. The colony, in fifteen years, numbered five thousand souls.

James I. died on the 27th of March, 1625, not being yet sixty years old ; and "full feeding, and the continual use of sweet wines," are alleged as a chief cause of his death. His son, Charles I., was a very different man ; but the two, father and son,

* Green's History, p. 465. † Ibid. p. 473.

had one fault in common, a lack of plain common sense. The son, however, on the whole, had the far higher character of the two. He led a moral, and, on the whole, a religious life. But he was sadly deficient in one respect: he never seemed to understand the value, the necessity of truthfulness; of wholeheartedness. He employed such men as Strafford and Laud; he gave them his entire confidence; he consented to their plans and proposals; and yet, when pressed, he allowed them, under his sign manual, to be put to death. "He had listened to the proposals of Strafford, when that minister advised him to establish a perfect tyranny; and had continued to trust him as his adviser. Yet he had surrendered up the same man to the violence of his enemies, when he ought to have defended him. Can we wonder that the world should have believed, that he, Charles, was not worthy to be trusted?"*

The same natural distrust was awakened in a different quarter. The House of Commons received positive assurances from the King. By other information it learned that opposite plans and purposes were entertained and discussed by the King in other directions. In this way distrust was generally created, till the prevalent feeling was that the Royal declarations were un-

* Bishop Short's History, p. 440.

reliable. It is to this impression and belief that it is to be attributed, that the King at last was put to death ; because his opponents in Parliament felt it impossible to rely upon any pledge that he gave or might give them.

A sad and dolorous period followed. Several years of what was called “the Commonwealth” followed ; and when “the Protector” died, the people felt relieved, and rushed back into a government by monarchy again ; not even stopping to ask for securities that the follies of James I.’s and Charles I.’s reigns should not be repeated.

The first practical question to be decided in the new reign was, whether the clergy of Cromwell’s time, who were in many instances Puritans, Presbyterians, or Independents, should remain in their benefices without real or professed conformity. On this question the two parties could not agree. An Act of Uniformity was passed, and the sincere and honest among the Nonconformists seceded. It is computed that nearly two thousand of the Nonconforming party gave up their benefices. It can hardly be doubted that, on the whole, the Church suffered largely by this secession. Much real religious life was shaken (or driven) out of it.

As to this king’s reign (Charles II.) we may be content with Bishop Short’s description of it :—

“ Charles himself sought rather to escape from

the trouble of governing, than was anxious to tyrannize over others." . . . "He was rapacious in seeking money for the sake of squandering it on his favourites. . . . He treated his wife as kindly as any man of his vicious habits could do; but he was the slave of his mistresses." "The circumstance which must load both Charles and his brother with an infamy which nothing can efface, was the manner in which they separated their own supposed interest from that of their country." "They were ready to become the pensioners of France, and to sell the interests of Britain that they might obtain the means of enslaving it." "The natural tendency of such a reign was to create a most stupendous degree of profligacy, moral and political, and this fruit was produced in abundance. All authors agree that this country was never more degraded in its morality than while Charles II. was king."*

Of the last of these four kings it cannot be necessary to say much. He differed little in essentials from the other three, except in this, that being blind—as they had been—to his own position, he thought it a safe thing to try to re-establish Popery in England. Neither of the former three had indulged in this senseless temerity. He merely repeated, under changed circumstances, the

* Bishop Short's History, p. 536.

mad attempt of Mary a century before. The result was that the Stuart family were at once and finally expelled : and, under William III. and the Georges, a wholly different principle of government was established. The country went back—or tried to go back—to the days,—to the usages and purposes of the Elizabethan times.

One fact, however, one change of a real and important kind must not be forgotten. The people of England were not now what they had been in the days of Parker, Grindal, and Whitgift. Disputes and divisions had sprung up ; and the enemy was not lacking in helping forward such quarrels. One chief result had been to force large classes of men to abandon their native land, and to remove themselves and their families to countries on the other side of the globe.

“ It was in the hour of despair that the Puritans won their noblest triumph.” “ They turned to the New World to redress the balance of the Old. It was during the years of tyranny which followed the close of the third Parliament of Charles I. that the great Puritan emigration founded the States of New England.”*

“ I shall call that my country,” said John Winthrop, “ where I may most glorify God and enjoy the presence of my dearest friends.” “ The two hundred

* Green’s History, p. 490.

who first sailed for Salem were soon followed by Winthrop himself with eight hundred more, and seven hundred more followed before the first year had run its course." "Between the sailing of Winthrop's expedition and the assembly of the Long Parliament two hundred emigrant ships had crossed the Atlantic, and twenty thousand Englishmen had found a refuge in the West."*

This departure from England on conscientious grounds continued during nearly all the seventy years of Stuart domination. It drew from England, there can be no doubt, scores of thousands of its best inhabitants. The first and most obvious of its results was, a gradual but constant lowering of the moral and religious tone of the English people. Those who had no care for, and who took no interest in, moral or religious questions, stayed in England; those who had a belief, a faith, to a large extent fled away. Each ten years of this emigration left England worse than it had been—lowered, weakened, demoralized.

Nevertheless, looking at the prospects of the world, we can see that the Divine Overruler may (or must) have had good reason for permitting this important change. In Elizabeth's days there was but one England in the world; in our own days we can see that there are two. A great nation has

* Green's History, p. 499.

arisen three thousand miles from us—yet speaking the same language—reading the same Bible, and sending—side by side with England—Christian missionaries to every part of the habitable globe.

II.

THE REVOLUTION OF A.D. 1688.

MOST readers, who have passed in review with us the lamentable history of the seventeenth century, will be prepared for the sad and yet natural result. Religion, and with it morals also, had well nigh perished out of the land. In the first reign (James I.) a mischievous strife was carried on, for two-and-twenty years, between "High Church" and Puritanism. In the second, Charles I., under the evil counsel of Laud and Strafford, pushed matters to such extremes that the king, giving up Strafford to the public indignation, had to listen to the exulting shouts of the London multitudes, proclaiming, "His head is off!—his head is off!"

From this the sequel naturally followed. Church, bishops, peers, all fell in succession; the king's own dethronement naturally followed, and an usurpation, called "the Commonwealth," ruled England for the next seven (or ten) years.

The reaction, the return to Stuart government, was scarcely a gain to the people. A Royal Court, crowded with obscene and indecent persons and

things, demoralized the higher classes of Englishmen for five-and-twenty years. A great deliverance at last was given, when, three years after the second Charles's death, the last of these Stuart kings was driven away.

It was eighty-five years since the calamitous and demoralizing rule of that family had begun, and the state of the country and of the people had been, of necessity, degenerating every year. The strife between Laud and his supporters, and Cromwell and his coadjutors, was in itself a depraving one. Doubtless, if any one could have shown to Laud, or to Cromwell, in the beginning of their course (as Elisha showed to Hazael : 2 Kings viii.), the deeds which they should afterwards perpetrate, the exclamation of either of them would have been, “Is thy servant a dog, that he should do this great thing?”

The wars of the Puritans with those who hated and persecuted them, had fearfully corrupted the people, and the flight of thousands of the most conscientious of the population had done, perhaps, even more injury than the contentions of those who remained behind.

But a new and, in religious matters, a totally different state of things was now to be introduced. In the Prince of Orange, England was to have an entirely different sort of king from any it

had yet seen. The hand of Divine Providence was plainly visible in the circumstances which forced England to call upon William, and which forced William to respond to the call. James had plainly shown his resolve to make England once more a province of the Papacy ; and yet, except in Holland, the English Protestants knew not where to find a leader. Meanwhile William, for his part, had no choice but to answer to their call. Though James's daughter, Mary, had been given to him as his wife, James still showed a constant preference for Louis XIV. of France, a bigoted Papist like himself ; and that same Louis had already shown his determination to annex Holland. England, then, must be made Holland's ally and protector, or else William himself must soon be a refugee.

The English people soon declared very explicitly for William's accession, and James was compelled to fly. The throne received, as joint occupants, William III. and his wife, Mary, the daughter of James.

William had now to choose, and to avow, his policy. And " William was a born statesman." He had watched for years past, the course of English politics, with which Church questions were continually entwined. He had seen the troubles arising out of the Act of Uniformity of A.D. 1662.

About two thousand rectors and vicars had been thrust out of the Church, and their congregations were naturally troubled and displeased. The Protestants of England, in bitter dissension, were warring against each other. Some years after, the Protestant bishops and clergy were assailed by James II. But the new king had disapproved and disliked both of these acts of internal oppression, and he soon avowed his resolution to countenance no such proceedings while the direction of affairs rested with him.

“So long as he reigned,” William declared, in memorable words, “there should be no persecution for conscience’ sake.” “We never could be of that mind,” he said, “that violence was suited to the advancing of true religion ; nor do we intend that our authority shall ever be a tool to the irregular passions of any party.” In consistency with this declaration, “the passing of a Toleration Act soon established a complete freedom of worship.”

Had this course been taken in Elizabeth’s days, it would probably have been an unmixed good ; but the days of the Stuarts had worked several fearful changes. The harassing of the Puritans had driven, in half a century, tens of thousands of the best of the middle classes to America. The religious character and feelings of the British people were thus fearfully changed for the worse.

Then came the profligate court of Charles II. To repeat the words we just now quoted from Bishop Short: "This country was never more degraded in its morality than while Charles II. was king."

What were the people of England likely to conclude, having themselves already become careless about such questions, but that all religious beliefs were matters of small importance? William was himself both a soldier and a statesman. He was the very heart and soul of an European confederacy, intended to withstand and to drive back the purposes and the attempts of Louis XIV., who was aiming at the extirpation of Protestantism out of Europe. This great question occupied his mind, and to this, all other matters were made to yield. He would gladly accept help from all classes, be they English or Scotch, Episcopalian or Presbyterian; followers of Luther or followers of Calvin. This was his meaning, but it was easy for many of his English supporters to go further, and to exclaim, "I quite agree with the king. Forms of religion are things of little value; nor are doctrines of much importance; except, perhaps, two or three of the leading ones."

Meanwhile, the progress of England was two-fold--upward in politics; downward in religion:—

"The peace of Ryswick was the final and decisive defeat of the conspiracy which had gone

on between Louis and the Stuarts ever since the treaty of Dover—the conspiracy to turn England into a Roman Catholic country, and into a dependency of France.”*

But in more important matters, England was sinking fast.

“The great luminaries of the Church had departed, and were succeeded by intriguing political prelates; and where a spirit of study was seen among the clergy, it was in such directions as to be worse than useless to the people. Nor was this all, for even the old Puritan element had become corrupted in the universal contagion.”†

It would, perhaps, be hardly just if we omitted to mention in this place the name of Tillotson. He was, clearly, the most eminent man in the English Church of William’s day. Earnest, eloquent, and active, and agreeing, probably, with the king’s views on things in general, it is not at all surprising that he became, in A.D. 1691, Archbishop of Canterbury. We have no right or inclination to cast any doubt on his sincerity, or on his conscientiousness. But his personal history sheds some light on the state and progress of things in the Church. He was far from being eccentric or peculiar in his thoughts or feelings.

* Green’s History, p. 684.

† Macfarlane’s Hist. of England, vol. iii. p. 369.

“John Tillotson was born in A.D. 1630, and, being the son of a strict Puritan, he was trained in Puritan principles, and continued to study under Presbyterian teachers at college, until a work of Chillingworth’s inclined his views to the theology of the Anglican Church. But, during the Protectorate, he still adhered to the Presbyterian plan of Church government, and at the Restoration preferred to take episcopal ordination from the Scottish Bishop of Galloway; *because he could receive it from him without oaths or subscriptions.* And, even to the end of his days, his favourite aim and wish was a plan of comprehension, by which Churchmen and Dissenters should be gathered into one fold.”*

It may have been a phase of thought in Tillotson’s mind, in which conscientious scruples were carried to an extreme. He may have said to himself, “I know that I can tell what I believe *now*, but I do not know what I shall believe *next year*, or the year after; and, therefore, I dislike, I shrink from, subscribing or avouching any doctrine as certainly true, which, seven years hence, I may hold to be at least doubtful.”

This, we repeat, may have been Tillotson’s feeling, and the feeling of many others in his day. Probably there has never been a period in the

* Macfarlane’s Hist. of England, vol. ii. p. 799.

last two centuries in which England has not had many men who held this view. Such men, however, must often lose sight of one peril attending this view of the matter. It leads multitudes of bystanders to adopt the tempting inference: "I see, then, that there is no *certainty* in any of these religious theories;—nothing, or scarcely anything, which can be propounded to any human being, as a fact which he ought to believe."

Some of the practical results of this line of thought will be brought to light in our next chapter.

III.

ANNE—GEORGE I.—GEORGE II.

MARY, the daughter of James II., was placed on the throne in A.D. 1689, because her father, by grave misconduct, and by flying the country, had abdicated, and because she was the next heir. It followed, as a natural consequence, that when, in A.D. 1702, the throne again became vacant, Mary's sister, Anne, was received as her successor, almost without doubt or dispute. The new queen, however, whether fortunately or unfortunately, had few plans or opinions of her own ; and the politics of England during her twelve years' reign (A.D. 1702-1714), were little more than contests between "Whigs" and "Tories ;" the two parties which came into existence in the later years of the seventeenth century.

The two following reigns went on in the same course. "The two sovereigns who followed Anne were strangers ; and their characters as nearly approached insignificance as it is possible for human character to approach it."*

* Green's History, p. 704.

The church, then, over which, a century before, such men as Parker, Grindal, and Whitgift had presided, now fell into very different hands. The four archbishops who succeeded Tillotson were Thomas Tenison, William Wake, John Potter, and Thomas Herring. Of the church itself, let Mr. Gladstone give us a description. "A low and secular tone of thought in the church, and in its ministers, could not but be the results. A rapid and great declension in the tone of all the doctrines of religion, and a miserable debasement of the entire religious action of the church followed closely."*

A few pages after he speaks of "the blight which had smitten her." And he cites the words of Bishop Burnet, who, writing in A.D. 1712, says:—

"I cannot look on without the deepest concern, when I see the imminent ruin hanging over this church ; and by consequence over the whole Reformation. The outward state of things is black enough—God knows ; but that which heightens my fears arises chiefly from the inward state into which we are unhappily fallen."†

In 1736 Bishop Butler writes:—

"It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not

* Gladstone's Church Principles, pp. 446, 447.

† Ibid. p. 453.

so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. They treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule.”*

Two years later, Archbishop Secker writes:—“An open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age.”†

And even towards the close of the period we are now describing, Bishop Warburton writes (A.D. 1753):—“Learning is, in the southern parts of this island, fast on the decline. Ignorance and barbarism are making large strides.” And again, “Learning is, in England, in a most deplorable condition. The books which come out are either miserable common-place collections, which are called ‘learning,’ or extravagant whimsies and paradoxes, which are called ‘science.’”‡

More recently, Mr. Green, though with more brevity, speaks of the decay and degeneration of the Church in those days. He says, “Never had religion seemed at a lower ebb.” “The church had sunk into insignificance.” “A shrewd observer brands the English clergy of that day as the most lifeless in Europe;” “the most remiss of their

* Gladstone, p. 454.

† Ibid. p. 455.

‡ Ibid. p. 461.

labours in private, and the least severe in their lives." The decay of the great dissenting bodies went hand-in-hand with that of the Church ; and during the early part of the century the Nonconformists declined in numbers as well as in energy.* As for the clergy, "they were, in Walpole's day, the idlest and most lifeless in the world."†

Another writer of our own day, Bishop Ryle, thus dilates on this fearful state of things: "The state of England in a religious and moral point of view in the middle of the last century was such that it is difficult to convey an adequate idea of it. English people of the present day can have no conception of the darkness that prevailed. . . .

England seemed barren of all that is really good. Christianity seemed to be as one dead : morality was trampled under foot. There was darkness in the Court ; in the parliament ; in the country. Darkness among the rich and among the poor ; a gross darkness that might be felt."

"What were the churches doing ? The answer is soon given. The Established Church existed, with its articles, its liturgy, its weekly services, its ten thousand clergy. Dissent existed with its hardly-won liberty and its free pulpit. Both existed, but they can hardly have been said to

* Green's History, p. 717.

† Ibid. p. 727.

have lived. They did nothing—they were fast asleep. Natural theology, cold morality, or barren orthodoxy, formed the staple teaching both in church and chapel. Sermons everywhere were moral essays, devoid of everything likely to awaken or convert souls.

“Sir William Blackstone, coming from Oxford to reside in London, determined to hear every clergyman of note in the metropolis, that he might know which church to attend. He leaves it on record, that he did not hear a single discourse which had more of Christianity in it than the writings of Cicero; and that it would, usually, have been impossible for him to discover, from what he heard, whether the preacher was a believer in Mahomet, or in Confucius, or in Christ.”*

It seems difficult to realize—to lay hold of, or entirely to believe, so strange, so appalling a fact, as that Christianity, in this England of ours, only a century ago, had scarcely any real existence. We are not, in truth, qualified, or capable of grasping, or comprehending *the Unseen*. Hence, such a question as, whether England had more spiritual life in the thirteenth century, or in the eighteenth—in the days of Wycliffe, or in the days of Whitefield, is beyond us. But, so far as we are

* Christian Leaders of the Last Century: Rev. J. C. Ryle, p. 15.

able to form an opinion, we incline to the belief that our land—the land in which Cranmer and Ridley and Latimer had been publicly burned, was, in the second century after the perpetration of that crime—not more Romish or more Protestant—but more perilously asleep than it had been since the ancient days of Alban or of Augustine.

How it ever was awakened from that death-like slumber is a strange, a wondrous story. It must be told alone and apart.

For a few moments, however, we are reminded by an apparently trifling incident in the reign of Anne, of a subject, apparently insignificant, but in reality of the greatest importance; which might have occurred to us in the reign of Elizabeth, but which could only have been noticed at that early period, as a wonderful instance of human forgetfulness.

We are accustomed to think and speak of the remarkable men who constructed our Articles and our Liturgy, as men of the most consummate knowledge; of wondrous largeness of mind. Our Cranmers and Ridleys, our Parkers, Jewells and Hookers,—could there be any Christian duty, any first principle of the Gospel, overlooked or forgotten by such men as these? The thought seems altogether inadmissible, and even absurd.

And yet, what shall we say if we find that the

last and the most emphatic command of the Lord Jesus Christ, repeated again and again by the first three Evangelists:—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;" and "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached among all nations,"—seems to have vanished from their memories and their thoughts, as much as if these emphatic words had never been uttered.

Still, however, we may call to mind that if this great command had been named and urged in the days of Elizabeth,—such facts as the Spanish Armada, and the treasons of the Scottish Queen, might have been given in reply, as reasons for, at least, some delay. The fact, however, remains the same. Now, at last, the Bible was an open book; the Gospels were publicly read in every church, again and again in every year. How strange does it seem, now, that for centuries those words of the Lord Jesus should be listened to *as if they meant nothing!*

At last, however, two centuries having elapsed, a faint sound, little more than a whisper, is heard; and the thought, at least, is breathed, fearfully, among a few Christian men, that it is strange, to say the least, that this command of the Lord Jesus, read frequently in all our churches, should never receive the least attention.

In the year 1701, moved by this thought, sent into their minds by, we cannot doubt, the Holy Spirit, some of the heads of the Church began to move, and just at the close of William's reign, and at the beginning of Anne's, they instituted, with the Queen's consent, “the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.” The name so appropriated was good; but for many years the operations of the new Society were limited to *the British Colonies*. So confined, the Society for a whole century was little more than a shadow. It raised about £1,000 or £2,000 per annum, and it sent a few schoolmasters and curates to some of the British Settlements. Still, it recognized the claim—the duty. Year by year a Sermon was preached, in a chief church of the metropolis;—a Meeting was held, and a Report was read, of the work done, in a few of “the British Colonies.” This was a recognition, at least, of a great and solemn duty. But, when compared with the fact, the performance, it must have resembled the utterances of a man not yet roused out of an uneasy slumber.

ENGLAND'S TRAINING.

V.

- I.—THE AWAKENING.
- II.—A SECOND ROUSING UP.
- III.—LIVING AND WORKING.

I.

THE AWAKENING.

THAT there was a great revival in the Church in the days of the Second George is hardly questioned by any writer of estimation. Mr. Gladstone himself refers to "the Romaines, the Newtons, the Scotts, the Cecils, and those who preceded and followed them," as a fraternity "to which," he says, "we owe so much."* Mr. Romaine was ordained in A.D. 1736; Whitefield in the same year; Grimshaw in 1731; Rowlands in 1733; Walker of Truro in 1737; Wesley in 1738; Hervey in 1736; Berridge in 1749; Venn in the same year; Fletcher and Toplady a little later.

This *simultaneousness* naturally reminds us of the appearance, two centuries before, of Luther, Melancthon, Bucer, Zuinglius, Fagius, *Œcolampadius*, Jonas, Calvin, Peter Martyr, and some others, all of whom were born within a few years of each other. In truth, when it pleases the Church's Head to say, "I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with

* Gladstone's Church Principles, p. 471.

knowledge and understanding" (Jer. iii. 15), it is not unusual with him (as in the case of the Apostles,) to send forth a *group* at once; or in or about the same time.

That a movement of some kind—not of a single man like Wycliffe, but of several men coming forth in several places at one and the same time, was seen in England in this reign of George II.—is a fact admitted by most writers. Thus, Mr. Green, after admitting that "there was a revolt against religion in English society; so that of the prominent statesmen of the time, the greater part were unbelievers in any form of Christianity, and distinguished for the grossness and immorality of their lives," begins to speak of "a religious revival which burst forth and changed in a few years the whole temper of English society."* "This revival began in a small knot of Oxford students," and he singles out "three figures from the group," namely, Whitefield and the two Wesleys.

With him agrees Mr. Macfarlane, who says,— "The profligate ethics of France had been methodized into a shallow atheistic philosophy of home-growth, which had become the creed of the gay and fashionable of the reigns of the first two Georges"; and he then passes on to describe "the Revival," remarking that "When a Church is to

* Green's History, p. 718.

be regenerated, and a national creed revived or purified, the most inadequate means or the most unlikely agents are made sufficient for the purpose.”*

“The Revival,” then, is the subject now before us ; and as in reality that revival consisted in the doings—and the consequences of those doings, of some ten or twelve ordained clergymen during the last twenty years of George II.’s reign, our shortest and simplest course evidently is to name and describe as briefly as we can, who these men were and what were their doings.

1. George Whitefield was the son of a poor widow woman who kept a small inn in Gloucester. Up to his fifteenth year he was sent to the Free Grammar School of that city. While attending there he was, he himself tells us, “a Sabbath-breaker, a theatre-goer, and addicted to filthy talk and foolish jesting.” At fifteen he seems to have been needed at the inn to assist his mother ; hence he left school, “put on the blue apron, and became a public-house attendant for a year and a half.” At the end of that time some friends made interest for him at the Grammar School, and obtained for him an exhibition to Pembroke College, Oxford, where he entered as servitor when he was about eighteen.

This change of life led to a change of thought

* Macfarlane’s History, vol. iii. p. 369.

and purpose. He began to turn his attention to the great subjects which were brought before him. He attended on all the means of grace. He visited the city prison and tried to do good to the prisoners. He made the acquaintance of James Hervey and the two Wesleys. He fasted twice a week, and read such books as "Thomas à Kempis," and Law's "Serious Call." Soon, however, he aimed higher, and preferred the study of the Holy Scriptures with prayer, which he says, "proved meat and drink to my soul." From this time forward his onward progress seems to have been unceasing. And as his entrance into college-life was not of his own seeking, but the work of others, so now, the next and more important step was the work of others also. Sympathising friends mentioned him to the bishop, who sent for him, conversed with him, and at last offered to ordain him whenever he felt prepared. Whitefield had been harassed by doubts and scruples as to his own fitness, but this offer decided him. "I began to fear," he writes, "that I might be fighting against God."

He was ordained in A.D. 1736, the first of the "Revival" preachers. He resembled John the Baptist in this and in another point. He was not only the predecessor of several others (like the Apostles), but he was (like the Baptist) a preacher,

and nothing but a preacher. He was not, like John Wesley, an organizer, or like Charles Wesley, a poet, or like Grimshaw, or Berridge, or Walker, or Venn, an earnest and zealous parochial clergyman ; he never sought such a position or such a work. He spent thirty-one years, A.D. 1739-1770, in the work of preaching ; never turning his thoughts either to parochial labour or to parochial income. He cared little for money, and generally refused it, except so far as daily wants needed to be supplied.

His first sermon was preached in St. Mary's Church in Gloucester, immediately after his ordination. Complaint was made to the Bishop soon after, that "he had driven fifteen people mad" by this sermon. He then returned to Oxford and took his degree, and seems immediately afterwards to have accepted any offers that were made to him ; beginning to preach first at the Tower church in London, then at various other churches in Islington, Westminster, and other parts of the metropolis. "Wherever he preached the churches were crowded, and an immense sensation was produced." Mr. Green describes his preaching as "extravagant, often common-place, but hushing all criticism by its intense reality, its earnestness of belief, its deep sympathy with the sin and sorrow of mankind."* We cannot attempt to de-

* Green's History, p. 718.

scribe at any length his laborious life of more than thirty years. It has been calculated that in the course of this time he preached not fewer than eighteen thousand sermons. And in a single week, after preaching in Moorfields, he received several hundred letters from persons intreating his counsel. Evidently, to form any accurate idea of the final results of all this missionary work must be wholly out of the question.

2. The next to Whitefield in practical efficiency was, obviously, his associate at Oxford, John Wesley. But the characters and the work of the men were entirely unlike. The first was like the Baptist, a preacher and only a preacher ; the second was an organizer, a founder. He built up, in a long life, what some may call a Church, and others a sect. But, whatever be the name given to it, the fact remains the same—the Society which John Wesley formed, and to which he gave laws and a constitution, is now reckoned by millions ; seen in England, America, and elsewhere.

3. The third to be named in this recapitulation is unlike the first two in one main feature. They lived chiefly in, and worked from, the English metropolis—he was a provincial from the beginning to the end of his days. Daniel Rowlands began life in a Welsh village, and in that village

he died. We first hear of him as Curate of Llan-geitho in Cardiganshire in A.D. 1733, and in that same place, in 1790, his days were ended.

How should a Welsh curate, living and dying in a Welsh village, become famous? By the same means and in the same way that Whitefield in the same series of years became famous. "The churches where he preached were crowded to suffocation. The effect of his ministry was something tremendous. Not only were the churches filled but the church-yards also." People used to flock to hear him preach from every part of the principality, and to think nothing of travelling fifty or sixty miles for the purpose. On Sacrament-Sundays it was no uncommon thing for him to have 1,500 or 2,000 or even 2,500 communicants.

These crowds annoyed the bishop, who said that "he had received many complaints of Rowlands' irregularities." At last he withdrew his license. But this step had no other than an injurious effect. "His friends and followers built him a large and commodious chapel, and emigrated there in a body." Rowlands went on his way for twenty-seven more years in quietness, and died in 1790 in peace, at the age of seventy-seven.

A Birmingham minister who came accidentally to a place in Wales where Rowlands was preach-

ing in the open air to an immense multitude of people, says:—

“I never witnessed such a scene before. The striking appearance of the preacher, and his zeal, animation, and fervour were beyond description. Rowlands' countenance was most expressive; it glowed almost like an angel's.”

4. We shall now group together four remarkable men, who were all at the same period incumbents of country-parishes in England, and all preaching the same Gospel that Rowlands and Whitefield had preached. They all were ordained between A.D. 1731 and 1749, and died at various ages, between A.D. 1761 and 1797.

William Grimshaw was minister of Haworth in Yorkshire, and remained there twenty-one years, until his death. He first strove to bring his own parish into order, and then showed his willingness to preach in other places when requested. He visited in this way Leeds, Halifax, Bradford, Keighley, and other great towns in Yorkshire and in Lancashire. This “irregular conduct” led, as it had done in Rowlands' case, to complaints being made to the archbishop. On the next opportunity, that prelate appointed a confirmation to be held at Haworth Church, after which he conversed with Mr. Grimshaw. He asked him, “When you first came to Haworth Church, how many communions

cants did you usually have?" "Twelve," replied the incumbent. "And how many have you now?" was the next question. The reply was, "In winter-time from three to four hundred; but in the summer nearly twelve hundred." On another occasion, the archbishop desired Mr. Grimshaw himself to preach, and having heard him, exclaimed, "I would to God that all the clergy in my diocese were like this good man!"

Samuel Walker was merely the stipendiary curate of Truro, a post which he accepted in A.D. 1746, and which he held until his death by consumption in A.D. 1761. He had been at Oxford at the time when Whitefield and Wesley were resident there, but no trace can be found of any acquaintance with either of them.

In fact, when Mr. Walker entered upon this curacy there was no sympathy between his religious views and those of Whitefield, Wesley, and Rowlands. "His only ambition was to be admired for his eloquence, and to become the reformer of the vicious by the power of persuasion." But an intimacy soon sprang up between the curate and Mr. Conon, the master of the grammar-school, and this led, in the course of some months, to an entire change in Mr. Walker's views.

And now one natural consequence soon followed. "Repentance, faith, and the new birth (John iii.)

became the chief topics of his sermons," and, as might have been expected, "astonishment and surprise were the first prevailing feelings in the minds of his hearers."

However, his manner is said to have been commanding and solemn in the extreme ; and his life so truly consistent, that he awed into silence those who had been most clamorous against him. At last such crowds attended his ministry, that the thoroughfares of the town seemed to be deserted during the hours of service ; so that it was said that you might fire a cannon down the street in church-time without hurting any human being. Not long after he began to preach the Gospel and call men to repentance, both the theatre and the cockpit were closed, and given up to other purposes. When he had preached in this manner for seven years, he had received no fewer than seven hundred applications from persons desiring to know "what they must do to be saved?" And this in a town containing only a few thousand inhabitants.

In A.D. 1753 a regiment of soldiers was quartered in Truro. Mr. Walker immediately began a new service and sermon on Sunday afternoon. The attention of the soldiers was arrested, and in the course of three weeks not fewer than a hundred of them came to his own house with the usual anxious

enquiries. In the course of little more than two months the number had increased to two hundred and fifty.

Mr. Walker died in his forty-seventh year, his disorder having been greatly accelerated by his incessant labours, single-handed, during fourteen years.

John Berridge took his B.A. degree in Cambridge in A.D. 1738, and was elected Fellow of Clare Hall in 1742. In 1755 he was presented by his college to the vicarage of Everton in Bedfordshire, in which parish he remained till his death, thirty-eight years after. His ministry in that place was fruitless for the first two years. He himself said afterwards in a letter to a friend, "I preached sanctification by the works of the law for two years; but never brought one soul to Christ." "But as soon as I preached Jesus Christ and faith in his blood, then believers were added to the church continually; then people flocked from all parts to hear the glorious sound of the gospel; some coming six miles, others eight, and others ten. Why was my ministry not blessed, when I preached salvation partly by faith and partly by works? It was because this doctrine is not of God; and He will prosper no ministers but such as preach salvation in His own appointed way."

Berridge now threw himself with constitutional energy into his master's service, with all his might, and soul, and strength. He used to preach in Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, and Huntingdonshire ; and sometimes in Suffolk, Essex, and Herts. In one single year he was said to have been the means of awakening four thousand persons. In all such statements allowance must be made for exaggeration, and also for false professions. Still, it cannot be reasonably doubted, that in his thirty years' ministry, he was the means of doing permanent good to thousands of souls.

Naturally, such a man was greatly disliked in many quarters, lay and clerical. Appeals were made to the bishop ; but there was an invisible wall of protection round him, and no weapon forged against the vicar of Everton seemed to prosper. From some extraordinary cause which it is impossible to explain, the evangelist of Everton was never stopped by his adversaries for a single day !

Henry Venn was born in 1724, and entered St. John's College, Cambridge, in 1742. In 1749 he was elected a fellow of Queen's College. He served the curacy of Barton, near Cambridge, and in 1750 removed to London, where he took a curacy in the city, becoming curate of Clapham in 1754.

Here he came under the influence of circum-

stances which conspired with the bent which his own mind was taking. In 1756 he suffered from a severe illness, which, for several months, gave him leisure for self-examination. Here, too, he became intimate with John Thornton and Dr. Haweis ; and afterwards with George Whitefield and Lady Huntingdon. Whitefield, in 1757, thus wrote of him :—

“Venn is valiant for the truth ; and his ministry has been owned of the Lord for the conversion of sinners. Thanks be to God !”

In 1759 he was appointed vicar of Huddersfield, where he remained for twelve years. “He went there a poor man, without rank or influence, and found the place a huge, dark, ignorant, immoral and irreligious town. He was the first clergyman in England who showed the power of evangelical aggression on a great manufacturing parish.” “As soon as he began to preach at Huddersfield, the church became crowded ; numbers became deeply impressed ; people flocked in from the distant hamlets, inquiring what they must do to be saved. His whole soul was engaged in preaching ; during the week he generally preached eight or ten sermons in distant parts of the parish.”

“The people began to go from Longwood in droves to Huddersfield Church, three miles off.

On their return they used to stop at the Firs' End, about a mile off, and talk over what they had heard before they separated for their respective homes."

One of his hearers said, "He was a wonderful preacher. When he warmed with his subject, he looked as if he would jump out of his pulpit. He made many weep. I have often wept at his sermons. I could have stood to hear him till morning."

He was wholly in accord with Whitefield, with Berridge, and with Grimshaw. When Grimshaw died, it was Venn who preached his funeral sermon; and when Whitefield died, out of many funeral sermons that of Venn was deemed the noblest.

But, after twelve years of most arduous labour at Huddersfield, his health gave way. A cough and spitting of blood and other signs of approaching consumption, gave him warning, and he was compelled to limit himself to one sermon a fortnight, and even that exertion usually laid him aside for several days. At that crisis, a small parish, Yelling, near Huntingdon, was offered to him, and his acceptance of it probably preserved his life for several years.

Of Henry Venn, Sir James Stephen writes:— "Venn was at once a preacher at whose voice

multitudes wept and trembled ; and a companion to whose privacy the wise resorted for instruction, the wretched for comfort, and all for sympathy. In all the exigences of life, the firmest reliance might always be placed on his counsel, his support, and his example. Like St. Paul he 'became all things to all men,' and for the same reason, 'that he might by all means save some.' "

These four—Grimshaw, Walker, Berridge, and Venn, were country clergymen, or rather provincials, placed, two of them in Yorkshire, one in the midland counties, and the fourth in Cornwall. One other remains,—a London incumbent, who differed in the nature of the work given to him, and also in the qualifications he possessed.

William Romaine, educated at Oxford, was ordained in A.D. 1736. "From his ordination onwards, there never was a period when he did not preach clear, distinct, and unmistakeable evangelical doctrines." Yet, for a reason to us invisible, he was left, or was assigned, to a quiet curacy in Surrey for the first ten years of his ministry. Those ten years seem to have been devoted to study. He produced a work in refutation of Bishop Warburton's " Divine Legation of Moses ;" and a Hebrew concordance, which occupied him several years.

Having finished this work, it was his purpose to

return to his native county, Durham, and to his own family ; when an offer was made to him of a London lectureship, which, coming to him unsolicited, he did not like to refuse. His life, then, as a metropolitan preacher commences in 1748. The next year he was chosen lecturer of St. Dunstan's in the West, and in 1750 assistant-preacher at St. George's, Hanover Square.

He was now, and from this time onward, a London clergyman. Some may wonder that ten years of his earlier life should have been given to a country curacy. But we may surmise, at least, that there was a reason for this. It was just then that such writers as Bishop Butler and Archbishop Secker had confessed, with grief, that—

“ It has come to be taken for granted, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry ; but that it has been at length discovered to be fictitious.”

And (the archbishop) that—

“ An open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of causes, the distinguishing character of the present age.”

Such being the state of the public mind, would it not be reasonable, that a new preacher, about to be sent into some of the chief pulpits of the metropolis, should be allowed several years of preparatory study ?

He was about to be called to occupy the pulpits of a church in Fleet Street, close to the Temple and to Lincoln's Inn ; and of another church in Hanover Square ; both places where the intellect and education of London, if found in a church *at all*, would be likely to be found. Now, we are never told of Romaine (as we are constantly told of Whitefield and of Rowlands), that his elocution, his voice, and his mere presence, naturally drew people in thousands round him. Yet Romaine never wanted hearers. In Fleet Street the people gathered round the doors in crowds ; in St. George's, Hanover Square, the pressure of a large congregation was made by the somnolent seat-holders a matter of complaint ; and when, at the end of his life, he was carried to his grave, " fifty coaches followed the hearse from Clapham Common, besides many persons on foot." These silent but unusual testimonies tell us that, though never applauded for his " pulpit talents," there was something in his sermons which attracted hearers of no vulgar or ignorant class, and made it clear that his ministry was not a sterile or unprofitable one.

Three names remain, but those names may be treated succinctly. They were not the names of men who startled society in their day and generation by unusually effective preaching ; but of men

who, in their homes, used their pens so efficiently as to work out, perhaps, more wide-spread and enduring results. We speak of James Hervey, Augustus Toplady, and John William Fletcher. Of these, in order of time, Hervey comes first.

Bishop Ryle remarks of him, that “he was one of the little band whom God sent into the world at a special time to do a special work together in England. Whitefield, Wesley, Grimshaw, Berridge, Rowlands, Romaine, Venn, Walker, and Hervey, were all born in the first twenty years of the eighteenth century, or between 1703 and 1724.”

James Hervey was ordained in 1736, and became curate to his father at Weston Favell. In 1752 he succeeded him as rector of that parish, where he died in 1758. Of his preaching powers we hear very little ; in fact, his constitutional disorder, pulmonary consumption, accounts for this, as it does for his early death.

It is as a writer, and only as a writer, that we have to regard him. His principal works were two ;—“Meditations and Contemplations,” and “Dialogues between Theron and Aspasio.” These were written in a style which Bishop Ryle describes as “florid, high-flown, and luxuriant,” and which excites his “wonder that these books should ever have become so extensively popular.” But of their popularity there exists no shade of doubt.

“His first work, the ‘Meditations,’ ran through twenty editions in a very short time, and this, when England had not one fourth of its present population. The second,—‘Theron and Aspasio,’ met with acceptance all over England and Scotland; and was translated into some continental languages.”*

Bishop Ryle concludes:—“I know that Hervey was a writer, and nothing but a writer. I know, too, that the value of his works has almost passed away. They did good service in their time, but are now obsolete. But I claim for him a high place among the spiritual heroes of the last century.”†

Augustus Toplady was, like Hervey, a man who had but a short career, dying in the year 1778 at the early age of thirty-eight. He could preach, and his preaching was valued, but his bodily strength was insufficient. It is as a writer that he must always be remembered. His “Historic Proof” of the doctrine of the Church of England is a treatise showing vast research; but

* Bishop Ryle, p. 356.

† In 1810, fifty years after Hervey had passed away, six different London publishers produced, and kept in stock, six independent editions of the “Meditations;” and four publishers printed the “Dialogues of Theron and Aspasio.” Considering that both these works had been on sale already for fifty years, it is quite evident that they must have been sold *by hundreds of thousands*.

his most precious bequest to the Church consists of his hymns—some six or seven of which take the first rank in all the hymn-books of the present day.

The last name we shall mention is that of John William Fletcher. He was a Swiss by birth, and like Toplady and Hervey, died comparatively young. His ordination took place in 1757, and he died in 1785 at the age of fifty-six. He was a preacher of great esteem, but his writings, occupying eight volumes, both represent the whole man, as he lived and died ; and present, at once, both his faults and his excellences. He took, in the Calvinistic controversy of that day, the opposite side to that which Toplady had taken ; and like Toplady, he sometimes said things on which he could not have looked back, after a dozen years had passed, without regret.

We are reminded, however, by the dates of the lives and deaths of Toplady and Fletcher, that we are overpassing the reign of George II. and are entering upon that of George III. And as the latter portion of history carries us into new scenes and hitherto untrodden ground, it seems clearly expedient to deal with it in another and an independent narrative. In that prolonged portion of history—a reign of sixty years—England underwent great changes, and found herself

at the close of it in a wholly different position from what she had ever before occupied.

Still, the line should not be too unequivocally drawn, as it would be if we represented all things to be sad and dreary in the first of these two periods, and hopeful or prosperous in the second. The truth is, that the prospects of England began to brighten in the middle of the eighteenth century ; but not exactly in that year which saw George II. depart and his grandson ascend his throne. In the one essential question the kingdom was advancing, but not distinctly in any one year, or as a result of any one death or succession.

When Elijah despairingly cried out, “I, even I only, am left,” God replied, “You are mistaken ; I have yet seven thousand left in Israel.” So, also, to Paul at Corinth, the Lord said, “I have much people in this city.” These things are not overlooked in the Courts of Heaven, nor are they lightly regarded. In the beginning of the reign of George I. the Divine Eye, passing over the British landscape, would see little if anything which was not intrinsically displeasing. But, towards the end of the following reign—of George II.—some “light had sprung up.” The men of whom we have just been speaking, all of them Divinely taught, had been called to labour, each in

his allotted post ; and they had done so, some with great, others with smaller success, but none with failure or disappointment. It is wholly out of our power to calculate, or even to surmise, the aggregate result ; but it seems a moderate supposition if, instead of seven thousand faithful men in Israel in Elijah's day, we were to hope that in England, or in Britain, in Whitefield's time, there were, at least, many seven thousands. Hence, however insignificant this may have been, as the fruits of the "breathing upon the dry bones" for a dozen or for twenty years, it must have been of a pleasing—of an acceptable kind. And something of this sort of feeling in the Divine mind, seems to be perceptible in the events of the later years of the reign of George II. In reading of the "Revival," which is recognised as a fact by Mr. Gladstone, and by the two historians Green and Macfarlane, our minds are naturally sent to Ezekiel's prediction,—“I the Lord will be their God ; I will cause the shower to come down in his season ; there shall be showers of blessing.”*

* Ezek. xxxiv. 26.



II.

A SECOND ROUSING UP.

THE change that England underwent, on the accession of the first English king of the Hanoverian line, might appear to most eyes to be immaterial, but it was very great. In the room of the two German princes, of insignificant character, who had left the leading statesmen of the day to "look after politics," there came now a youth, just arriving at man's estate, whose mother had for years entreated him "to be a King." He was, unquestionably, a man of good intentions and of blameless morals. When he heard of the Archbishop of Canterbury's practice of giving balls and routs in Lambeth Palace, he wrote to him to desire that such things might at once cease. But in resolving, as his mother bade him, to become at twenty the ruler, in all things, of an empire, he erred greatly. "In ten years he reduced government to a shadow; and turned the loyalty of his subjects into disaffection. In twenty he had forced the colonies of America into revolt and

independence ; and brought England to the brink of ruin. Work such as this has sometimes been done by very great men, and often by very wicked and profligate men ; but George III. was neither profligate nor great.”*

The truth, before the century ended, was seen to be, that the Church’s Ruler had a warning, a rebuke to give to His people in England ; and for this purpose He used Abstention. He left human weakness and blindness to work their natural results. The rebuke was, as He had intended, understood and felt, and it worked out consequences of the most invaluable kind.

The position of England in the middle of the eighteenth century differs so largely from what it had been during the preceding forty years, that it seems expedient and almost necessary to draw a line at the opening of the reign of George III. The nation, viewed politically,—viewed with Whig or Tory eyes, had been advancing for some time past. It had seen a military hero in Wolfe, and it had still a statesman in Chatham. But on the accession of George III., it soon was conscious of two or three important changes.

Under the two Hanoverian kings neither morals nor religion had found any encouragement from the ruling powers. The king’s mistresses mingled

* Green’s History, p. 741.

at courts and levees with the king's daughters. The Prime Minister, the Duke of Grafton, was in the habit of appearing with his paramour at the play. All this ceased when the young king ascended the throne. He found the nation carrying on a successful war, under the guidance of an able and energetic minister. He disliked the idea of war, because he felt his own incompetence in such matters. He dreaded the influence of a Chatham, because he was conscious of his own inferiority. Hence his earliest efforts were applied to gain peace, and to compel the resignation of his Prime Minister. In both these objects he succeeded. Within the first two years of his reign, preliminaries of peace with France had been signed, and Chatham had resigned. One serious result soon followed. Inferior men received the Premiership, and in A.D. 1765 the Stamp Act was passed, which opened a dispute with the American Colonies ; leading to absolute quarrels in 1769 ; open war in 1774-5, and the separation of America from England in 1782-3. These colonies, now "the United States," had contained, at the beginning of George's reign, 1,050,000 people, but at the time of separation nearly 2,000,000. England had lost the largest of all her foreign possessions. Mr. Green describes, no doubt accurately, the popular feeling so soon as this separation began to be realised :—

“There was less thought of what England had *retained* than of what she had *lost*. Such a parting seemed to be the knell of all her greatness. England looked upon herself as on the verge of ruin.”

This feeling, we can all be conscious, might have been a very natural one. And yet, looking back on the event after the lapse of a century, we can see it to have been a merciful one in two respects.

1. England could never have retained that vast possession, containing now more than fifty millions of people—not Hindoos or Mahometans—and have pretended to govern it and to legislate for it at a distance of three thousand miles. Hence it was far better, and was seen by the All-seeing Eye to be far better, that the parting should take place in America’s infancy, than that it should be deferred to the troubrous times of the French Revolution.

2. But the loss sustained by England had another purpose—another intention. And this intention in the Divine mind, it was made to fulfil.

The Evangelists had plainly told us very distinctly, eighteen hundred years ago, what was the last injunction given to His disciples by the Lord Jesus, just before His Ascension.

St. Matthew writes, “Jesus said, All power is given unto Me in heaven and earth. Go ye,

therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," "and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

St. Mark adds, " He said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

St. Luke says, " He said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day ; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

This command could not be limited to the few men to whom Christ was speaking ; it was clearly impossible that they should "preach to all nations." The promise, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," showed that the command was given to the Spiritual Church of all ages and of all countries.

Now these Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke, had been ordered to be read in all the churches in England every year. And this order was obeyed punctually by Mr. Romaine, Mr. Cecil, and Mr. Newton ; and they could not have read the words we have quoted heedlessly ; they could not have read these plain words to their congregations year by year without the thought occurring

to their minds, “What are we doing to obey this positive command?”

Mr. Newton, the friend of Cowper, had been called to London, and had become a London rector in A.D. 1780. In that same year we find him writing to a friend in Newport Pagnel, “Horrid times, indeed! worse and worse, and I fear they will be worse still.” In 1781 he writes again, “Public affairs look darker still. I am afraid that what we next hear from America will not be pleasing. I think of the words, ‘In those days the Lord began to cut Israel short.’”

At the end of 1782 it began to be rumoured that the final separation of America from England was a settled point, and Christian men, as well as mere politicians, were generally sad at heart.

About this same time, also, Mr. Cecil had settled in the metropolis. It can be no surprise, then, to us to read that on the 16th of January, 1783—the separation of America being “the news of the day”—a meeting was held in London, at which Mr. Newton, Mr. Cecil, and two others were present, and at which it was resolved to form at once a small Society, to be called, “The Eclectic,” which should hold fortnightly meetings “for the consideration of the state of the nation, and of the duties of the Church” under present circumstances.

The first meeting consisted of the Rev. John

Newton, the Rev. H. Foster, and Eli Bates, Esq., and the Society soon consisted of twelve or fourteen members resident in London, and about as many country ones.

These meetings commenced, and were regularly carried on; and it could not be long before the question would arise, "The Lord's last command—what are we doing to yield any, even the least obedience to it?" In A.D. 1786 we find the topic started and discussed: "The best method of planting and propagating the Gospel in Botany Bay?" (now Australia). Other questions of the same kind shortly followed.

It may seem strange to us, living in an age when "Missions" and "Missionary Societies" are as common as daily bread, to hear of such consultations as we now find to have been going on in A.D. 1786, 1788, 1790, and 1793 in various parts of England, on what seems to us one of the simplest and easiest of all things. And yet, if the mind dwells upon it for a few moments, doubts and difficulties of various kinds will quickly be seen to be inevitable.

There were no missions, or at least, none presenting a practical example. A "Society for the Propagation of the Gospel" had indeed been founded in A.D. 1701; but in its charter, granted in 1706, the king is made to say, "Whereas we are

credibly informed that in *many of our plantations, colonies, and factories*, the provision for ministers is very mean, and many others are wholly destitute." Thus limited to the British colonies, it is no matter of surprise to find that in A.D. 1714-15 the annual subscriptions brought in only £577, and the whole income of the Society was only £1,647.

"Missions to the heathen," to the poor Hindoos, Africans, or Chinese, had never been attempted ; the purpose, the plan, was a thing yet to be devised in the Church of England, or among any of the other religious bodies. Where were the men to be found to take their lives in their hands, and go as strangers among the savages of New Zealand or Western Africa ? And if some few such men could be found, how were they to be assured that food and clothing would be sent after them the next year, or in the years following ? A Missionary Society for any such purpose was a thing which had not yet been constructed.

Such being the state of affairs, it is with no surprise we hear, just when England had suffered the rebuke—the loss of her greatest foreign possession—that many Christians, both in the Church and out of it, began to ponder the crisis, as it seemed to them, and to seek to learn its meaning. To repeat Mr. Green's words :—" The parting (with

America) seemed to be the knell of all her greatness. England looked upon herself as on the verge of ruin."

And it is just *then* that we begin to hear of such movements as these: (and doubtless there were many others of which no record has been preserved).

It was in A.D. 1786 that, as we have already noted, the Eclectic Society, a newly-formed Association, began to deliberate upon missionary proposals.

It was in that same year that the Wesleyan-Methodists resolved to take up missionary work; and some missionaries were sent to the poor slaves in the West Indies.

In 1790 and the years following, Dr. Carey, a Baptist Minister in Northamptonshire, sought to assemble his brother-ministers in that neighbourhood, to deliberate on the Lord's last command, and upon their forgetfulness of it.

In 1791 and 1792 Dr. Bogue, an Independent Minister in Hampshire, took the same course, both in his own neighbourhood and also in the Metropolis.

Meanwhile, in 1789, 1790 and 1791 the question was again and again discussed at the Eclectic Society in London.

In 1795, at Rauceby in Lincolnshire, three

meetings were held, at which fourteen clergymen were present, Mr. Robinson of Leicester and Mr. Simeon of Cambridge being two of them, at which a leading question discussed was, “Missions to the Heathen.”

But now it began to be felt that deliberation and discussion had continued long enough ; and that some practical measures should be taken.

In A.D. 1792 the Baptists, influenced by Dr. Carey, resolved upon the establishment of a Missionary Society ; and Dr. Carey gave the best proof of his earnestness by declaring himself ready to depart for India. He followed his profession by immediate action ; and, as the East India Company forbade all attempts at proselytism in their territories, he directed his course to the neutral ground of Serampore.

Meanwhile Dr. Bogue was pressing forward his scheme of a Missionary Society formed by the union of Churchmen and Dissenters. In A.D. 1795 he succeeded in the formation of “The London Missionary Society.” But his plan was not accepted by the majority of Churchmen, and, after prolonged discussions, another society called “The Society for Missions to Africa and the East,” a little afterwards changed to that of “The Church Missionary Society,” was formed in the last year of the century. And thus closed this long period

of deliberation, and the period of action, appearing with the new century, began.

Dr. Mullens, who had himself been a missionary, and was afterwards a secretary in London, said in 1860, in taking a review of the past:—

“I doubt if a single convert had been made before the year 1800. Dr. Carey had gone to India, and a few brethren had joined him, and they had settled at Serampore. A few of our brethren had sailed for the South Sea Islands. There were one or two in Africa, one or two in the West Indies, and the rest of the world was an awful blank.”*

The moment, then, which divided the eighteenth century from the nineteenth, was the point at which, we may say, deliberation and discussion as to first principles ended, and practical and efficient work began. In every year, from 1783 to 1799, we find discussion going on; but with 1800 or 1801, Missionary work, in Asia, Africa, and America, is commencing. Presently, when we come to look upon the work of the Nineteenth Century, we shall find work beginning, or going on, in India, in the West Indies, and in the South Seas. We may reasonably hope that after the closing year of the past century, no other twelve-month has since been seen, to which the dismal

* Liverpool Conference, 1860, p. 331.

words of Dr. Mullens could be applied, “ I doubt if a single convert had been made.”

Still, however, even in England itself, it was an up-hill task which the new Committees had undertaken. The two chief things needed, apart from Invisible Aid, were, men fit to go forth as missionaries, and money to support them. For four long years the Church Missionary Society found itself unable to discover in England a single man able and willing to undertake such a work ; and the Committee was obliged, at last, to send to Germany to seek for missionaries ; and in that fourth year the whole receipts of the Society amounted to no more than £566. These difficulties could not quickly disappear. When more than ten years had elapsed, the whole income of the three Societies had only reached (in A.D. 1810) the London Missionary Society, £5,298 ; the Baptist Missionary Society, £3,421 ; and the Church Missionary Society, £2,467. And the Missionary Stations planted in the whole heathen world amounted to no more than *fourteen*.

Such was the condition of this great work in A.D. 1811-1812.

III.

LIVING AND WORKING.

THERE is scarcely any period, in all England's history, from its first beginning, which can be compared with that of 1812-1813, for its immeasurable and incalculable importance. It differs largely from the chronicles of the Wycliffe times, or from those of the Reformation;—those narratives occupying, each of them, a large portion of a century, while this more modern and more rapid tempest was seen to pass over and vanish in the course of a score or two of months.

The one chief ambition of that extraordinary man, Napoleon Bonaparte, had been, for some years past, to become—perhaps without any new title—the arbiter, the guide, in fact, the dictator of Europe. Perhaps, after having defeated in the battle-field the sovereigns of Russia, Austria, Prussia, and of half-a-dozen smaller kingdoms, this might be thought to be no very extravagant claim. But, however this might be, it was one which England, tranquil in her supposed inaccessibility, could never, in any degree, recognize. On

this ground chiefly the quarrel, the mutual alienation, rested. To force England to submit, Napoleon resolved to exclude our merchants from the ports—the commerce of all the rest of Europe. One only of all the continental sovereigns—the Emperor of Russia—refused to submit to Napoleon's dictation. He was firm; Napoleon, therefore, had recourse to the last sort of reasoning—Force. He would make war upon Russia. In the first of the two years of which we are speaking, 1812, he assembled, of his own and of German troops, 500,000 men in the middle of Germany, to march several hundred miles, on the strange errand of compelling an independent and a great sovereign, to close, at his command, all the ports of Russia against the ships of England. This was the main employment of Napoleon in the spring of that year, 1812.*

Meanwhile, in England, in that very same year, a totally different sort of quarrel, or dispute, was beginning; a dispute which to ordinary politicians might appear to be of small importance, but which, to Christian men (and, we may add, to watching angels also), was seen to be of infinitely

* One narrative ascribes to him this language:—"I will destroy English influence in Russia; and then Spain must fall. My destiny is not yet accomplished; I must make one nation out of all the European states; and Paris will then be the capital of the world."

greater moment than the plans or strifes of the Napoleons or Alexanders of the outside world.

For, in fact, the transactions going on at that same period of time in England, in London, among England's rulers, while they involved no question concerning human life or human ambition, excited far greater interest in the courts of Heaven, than all the victories or defeats of 1812 or 1813 in Russia, in Poland, or in Germany.

The East India Company of London had gone on, for more than half a century past, augmenting, sometimes by conquest, sometimes by purchase, its possessions in India. At the same time, being chiefly a trading company, it had been guided by policy,—by prudential considerations. Foremost among these considerations had been the maxim, that it must not needlessly excite the animosity of the people of India by assailing, or making war upon, their religion or religions. For the Englishmen employed in doing their work, the directors would provide chaplains, but beyond this they would not venture. They would neither attempt the proselytizing of the people, whether Mohammedans or Hindus, nor would they allow any other persons to undertake such a work, in the countries of which they had undertaken the government.

The operation of this system may be seen in two remarkable cases. Two very different men,

but each highly qualified, and “devoted for life,” appeared in India ; the one coming from England, the other from America, but both hampered by this rule. Dr. Carey spent a life in giving to the people of India versions, in their own tongues, of the Word of God. But he had learned that there was a small Danish settlement at Serampore, where the East India Company’s prohibition would not apply. He crept into that little corner, and laboured, almost silently, for many years, making many translations of the Bible into the Indian tongues. The other, Dr. Judson, one of the greatest missionaries that the Church of Christ has ever known, was chased out of India by the Company’s prohibition, and had to betake himself to the wholly heathen land of Burmah, where both he and his admirable wife spent their lives.

But in the memorable year 1813, the Company’s Charter required revision and re-enactment in the British Parliament. All the friends of missions in England were aware of this fact, and “they began to bestir themselves in the early part of 1812,”* the preceding year,—the year in which Napoleon began to gather his armies. They had leaders of character and influence, both in and out of Parliament ; foremost among whom were Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Grant, and Mr. James Stephen.

* Life of the Rev. Josiah Pratt, p. 70.

In the earlier months of 1813 they began to send petitions to Parliament, and to urge the question upon the Government by deputations. Happily, the Prime Minister of England at that time was Lord Liverpool, "a man," says Mr. Green, "who was temperate and well-informed;" and, it may be added, who had a sincere regard for religion. The Government, so guided, accepted Mr. Wilberforce's views, and resolved that India should be thrown open to Christian Missions, and that a commercial corporation in London should no longer overrule Christ's last command.

As the decisive vote in Parliament was taken in July, 1813, it may safely be assumed that the Government had chosen its course in the spring, probably in April or May of that year. The Church Missionary Society, in its next Annual Report, rightly said that—

"Never was the royal assent given to a Bill of *more national importance*, than that for the renewal of the Charter of the East India Company, on the 21st of July, 1813."

As we have already said, the decision of the Government must have been made known in April or May of that year. And never, surely, was the promise, "Them that honour Me, I will honour," more signally fulfilled than in this case. On the 21st of June, 1813, Wellington won his greatest

victory in Spain ; and on the 7th of July the French army fled over the Pyrenees, and evacuated that kingdom. Before the opening of July the news of this great victory had reached the hesitating monarchs of Germany, and it decided the Austrian emperor to join with Russia and Prussia in driving Napoleon out of central Europe. In October, by their victory at Leipzig, this object was effected, and the French army retreated into its own country. The short campaign of 1814—renewed by Napoleon's return in 1815, ended the war. The man who had been England's greatest dread for several years, became now her captive ; and Europe, having received a long and well-deserved chastisement, obtained at last, a half century of nearly universal peace.

The year 1813, then, must have been one to British Christians to be for ever kept in mind ; to be remembered with joyfulness, and with lifting up of the heart. It was one to be remembered, both for what it left behind and for what it began. The foe who had for many years stood with threatening gestures on the opposite shores, was now disappearing, and in a few short months had vanished to be feared no longer. Better still, the sin which had, for almost a century, stained her name and burdened her conscience—the sin of prohibiting the preaching of the Gospel of Christ

to countless millions of heathens,—that sin was confessed, and its longer continuance was forbidden. These were two of the foremost blessings already realized. But such mercies generally fertilize the soil. They lead to new products. And this was soon seen.

The liberty to preach “the unsearchable riches of Christ” in populous India having been conceded to her ;—it remained for Christians to enter by that open door. This was seen ; and unquestionably the work of missions was taken up from 1813 and onwards, as it had not been ever attempted in England before.

Up to that time, 1813, the Church Missionary Society had but three stations among the whole heathen population of the globe. Its labourers were only *twelve*, its income for the year was but £3,046. If we pass over only ten years, and look at 1823, we find its income augmented to £32,226, its stations are forty-three, and its labourers are 280, of which forty-two are clergymen.

If we look further, we find, in 1813, only three missionary societies. But in that year, or the next, the Wesleyans formed such a society ; and shortly after “the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel” determined “to go to the heathen” in earnest. So now we find five societies at work. In 1813 the three societies raised only about

£10,000 or £12,000 altogether. In 1823 the five societies raised about £100,000, and recently their joint incomes have annually amounted to more than £600,000.

We ought not to forget,—we have no inclination to forget, one of the greatest and most important of all these Societies,—the British and Foreign Bible Society; though it would be inaccurate to describe it as a *Missionary Society*. Its sole work is that of translating, printing, and publishing certain books; or rather, THE BOOK, formed of the writings of several inspired authors.

Of this Book, the Society, since its formation in 1804, “has had a share in the translation, printing, or circulation in two hundred and sixty-one languages or dialects.” And it has sent abroad *more than ONE HUNDRED MILLIONS* of Bibles, Testaments, or portions;—expending on this work upwards of Nine Millions of money! Surely few public bodies have ever been so honoured. And the Missionary work, properly so called, must have been thus helped and forwarded, all over the earth, in a measure which, to human minds, is quite incalculable.

But, besides this great Society, there has sprung up, side by side with the larger bodies, a number—thirty or forty in all,—of assistant or subsidiary Societies,—“Zenana Missions,” “South American

Missions," &c., &c., which gather annually from two to three hundred thousand pounds ; thus raising the whole sum contributed to some £1,200,000 year by year. And beyond and above all this, there has begun and grown up a wondrous supply of *individuals*,—of men and women who, often at their own cost, have gone into far distant lands, to search and discover what they could do to spread Christ's Gospel.

Here, however, we are reminded of our subject, which has been, from the beginning, *England*. How has England fared amidst all this foreign work ? And we confess that we find it difficult to turn our eyes and our thoughts in this direction ; because of a feeling of dread which arises when we remember the natural inclination of human beings to turn all kinds of facts to the purpose of self-complacency.

A short time since, a festival-time was kept in the town of Ramsgate, to bear witness to the interest which was felt by the inhabitants, in the return of the birth-day, for the hundredth time, of a highly-esteemed inhabitant, Sir Moses Montefiore. He must have been, then, a boy at school when the French Revolution broke out. It would be within his own memory, therefore, that William Pitt, the English Premier, when some ardent politicians

counselled a war with France, tried to moderate their vehemence by the thought that "it would be a nation of twelve millions assailing a nation of thirty millions!"

If Mr. Pitt used this language, it would only be because all the Gazetteers and Geographies of the time were in the habit of so describing the things around them. Malte-Brun gives the population of England and Wales in 1790 as 8,675,000, of Scotland as 1,599,068, and of Ireland as 2,845,932. As to Canada, it was said, on George III.'s accession, to have 45,000 souls. The West Indies had plenty of negroes, but very few English. In fact the usual description, in the middle of George III.'s reign was, "England, a nation of twelve millions."

As to the present, if we take up the Almanack of the year in which we are living, we read, as "The British Empire":—

Great Britain and Ireland	36,200,000
Indian Possessions	256,000,000
Other Eastern Possessions	3,850,000
Australasia	3,000,000
North America	4,550,000
Guiana, &c.	200,000
Africa	2,250,000
West Indies	1,300,000
European and various	375,000
	307,725,000

No such nation or empire, we may say, has ever

existed on this globe before ; and, let us add, it has been the realization of no human purpose—of no human device or contrivance. What statesman or soldier ever planned the exchange of the anomalous position of India in the first half of this century for the distinct and natural situation it now occupies ? Or the growth of Australia and North America into two provinces, having, between them, nearly ten millions of people ? Or that the British Isles themselves should find their twelve millions growing into three times that number ? Has it, then, happened by chance ? No, truly, but the author of the whole was Invisible, was Divine.

Is this state of affairs, then, of certain continuance ? Hardly so. In the records of the Old Dispensation, we find a serious, a solemnizing lesson. One chief example set before us, is that of Israel in its greatest days. David's son was kindly regarded by David's Lord, from the beginning of his career. That Lord spoke personally to him, not once, merely, but several times. Solomon devoted himself, apparently, to the worship and service of God, and he built, giving the labour of more than 100,000 men to the work—a work which occupied seven years, a temple, probably the most magnificent that the earth ever saw ; and at the end of the seven years he dedicated it to

the Lord, the God of Israel. And God again appeared to him, and accepted the offering ; telling him also—" If thou wilt walk before me in integrity of heart, and in uprightness, to do all that I have commanded thee ; then will I establish the throne of thy kingdom for ever ;" adding, at the same time, " If thou shalt at any time *turn from following me*, and will not keep my commandments, then will I cut off Israel out of the land which I have given them : and this house will I cast out of my sight." (1 Kings ix.)

For many years after this, Solomon continued to walk uprightly ; but, at the end of his days, the women of his household " turned away his heart after other gods," and he built " an high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and for Molech, the abomination of the children of Ammon." And the Lord was angry, and said unto Solomon, " Because thou hast done this thing, I will surely rend the kingdom from thee, and will give it to thy servant : but I will give one tribe to thy son ; for David my servant's sake."

All this was fulfilled. When Solomon was loyal and obedient, " he exceeded all the kings of the earth for riches and for wisdom ; and all the earth sought to Solomon, to hear his wisdom ; which God had put in his heart." (2 Kings x.)

How terribly was all this reversed when Solomon

had fallen away. His death was unlamented ; ten tribes at once rebelled against his son, and the great and famous kingdom which had been honoured over all the then-known earth, shrank and crumbled away into the petty remnant of Judah and Benjamin, with, probably, some two or three millions of people !

England, in former ages, was trained ; but the rules, the method, indicated by St. Paul in Hebrews v., were kept in view in successive ages. To Ethelbert's Jutes the Thirty-nine Articles of Elizabeth's days were not offered ; the narratives of the four Evangelists were more suitable. England's history, in these respects, is deeply interesting. Augustine of Canterbury, with his friends Melitus, Justus, and Aidan, were men fitted for the occasion. Afterwards came Bede and Alfred, Alcuin, and then Anselm. The clouds and shadows of the Papacy followed, and the Grossestetes and Bradwardines of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were but few.

Light at last broke forth resplendently. In Wycliffe and in his successors in the Tudor times, England had indeed the fulfilment of the great promise given by Jeremiah :—“I will give you pastors after mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding” (chap. iii. 15).

The teaching of the Bible, and the Bible itself, came forth abundantly and mercifully, between A.D. 1337 and 1559; it was preached largely in our churches, and accepted thankfully by thousands of our people; and it has continued, in our creeds and formularies and statutes, the same to this day.

Nothing remained to the Enemy but his ancient device, described in Gen. iii. and again in Matthew iv. He has tried it, and has succeeded, more than once or twice. St. Paul had received a large foreknowledge of this, as he told the Thessalonians. He warns them, in his second epistle, chapter ii., that “‘the day of Christ,’ the day of ‘His Final Coming and triumph,’ should not come, ‘until there had first been seen a falling away.’ But the End should be, that ‘that Wicked One’ shall at last be overthrown;—‘the Lord shall consume him with the Spirit of His mouth, and destroy him with the brightness of His coming.’”

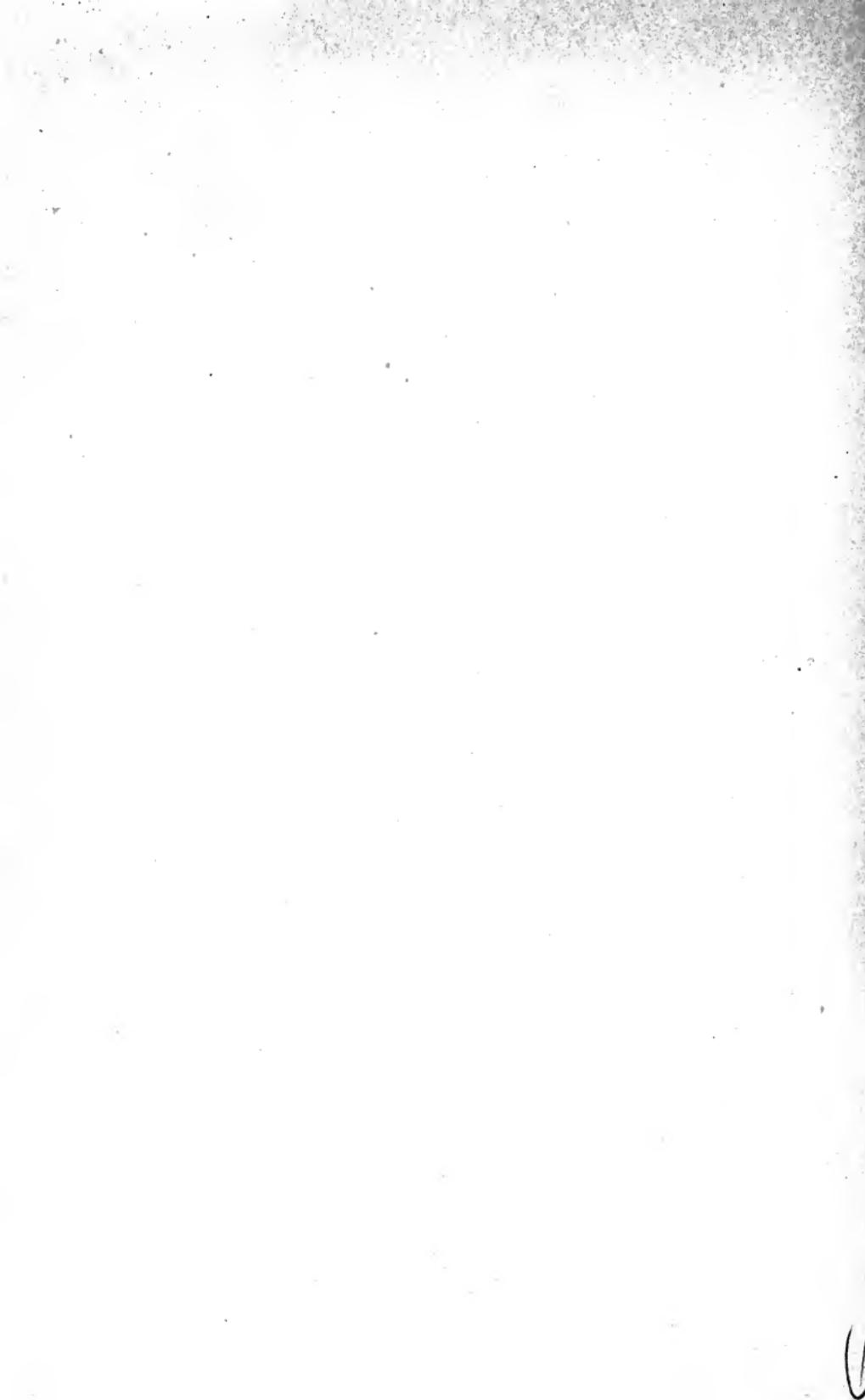
Into the Future we shall not attempt to search. It is enough for us to know that, as to the general result, there is not a particle of uncertainty or of doubt. The servants of God, in the olden times, spoke very unreservedly on this point. David tells us, in Psalm xxii., that “The kingdom is the Lord's, and He is the Governor among the nations”; and in Psalm lxvi., “He ruleth by His power for-

ever ; His eyes behold the nations." Job adds,— "He increaseth the nations, and destroyeth them ; He enlargeth the nations, and straiteneth them again" (chap. xii.). Nor are these large and general principles merely ; they pervade all the details of human life. Jeremiah tell us :—"I know that the way of man is not in himself : it is not in man that walketh, to direct his own steps" (chap. x.). And in Proverbs xxi. we read, "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord ; He turneth it whithersoever he will." Nothing can exceed the fulness and explicitness of one of the Divine declarations, given by the mouth of Jeremiah :—"I have given all these lands into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar my servant, and all these nations shall serve him, and his son, and his son's son, *until the very time of his land come* ; and, *then*, many nations and kings shall serve themselves of him" (chap. xxvi.). It was by the same prophet that God said to Israel, "Behold, as the clay is in the potter's hand, so are ye in mine hand, O house of Israel !"

THE END.



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